

IN THESE TIMES

HOLOCAUST
Page 24



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**THE SUN
WHO
WILL
CONTROL
OUR
ULTIMATE
SOURCE
OF
ENERGY
?**

A NEW PAGE 3

ENERGY COALITION

THE INSIDE STORY

By Lowell Finley



In An Giang province, Vietnam, this little girl survived a Cambodian attack.

The Hidden Stakes in Indochina

Each time more blood is shed along the Cambodian-Vietnamese border, more is written about the historic and colonial origins of the conflict between these two communist neighbors in Indochina. But much more is at stake than grievances out of history books.

Cambodia and Vietnam are at war over the future, much as their conflict is rooted in the past. Oil, water and ideology—all potent and volatile factors in Asian politics—have transformed the traditional Vietnamese-Cambodian hostilities into a battle over what form progress will take in Indochina into the 21st century.

In a region where even party officials and kings are only one remove from a peasant farmer tilling a flooded paddy field, water not only means political control, but the way water is used decides the future of whole nations.

Cambodia boycotts regionalism.

Less than three years after Saigon was renamed Ho Chi Minh City, the Vietnamese communists support a development strategy for the Mekong basin originally devised by American and European experts. The Khmer communists violently oppose international cooperation to exploit the Mekong's enormous irrigation and hydro-electric potential. They fear it would doom Cambodia to permanent economic subservience to Vietnam and neighboring non-communist Thailand as well.

The Mekong basin encompasses all of Cambodia, most of Laos and northeast Thailand as well as Vietnam's richest agricultural lands. A regional approach to damming the Mekong in order to multiply crop yields and produce massive amounts of electricity implies a regional future for Southeast Asia—a future of close international cooperation among Southeast Asia's communist and non-communist nations—that would leave no room for national rivalries, and, the Cambodians fear, would subordinate their interests.

While differences over approaches to revolutionary development may have unexpectedly intensified the dispute, the problem was clear even when Mekong development plans were being made by UN experts supported by the U.S. In 1972 a World Bank review of Mekong development plans pointed out that building the two most important Mekong dams—at Pa Mong near the Laotian capital of Vientiane and at Stung Treng in

central Cambodia—would displace 700,000 people, mostly poor Khmer and ethnic Lao peasants producing vital crops for local consumption.

But while Cambodian self-sufficiency would be reduced, most of the benefits—electricity, flood control and irrigation water—would be felt in the densely populated areas around Saigon in Vietnam and Bangkok in Thailand. Undertaking such massive projects, the World Bank concluded, "requires the full commitment and the active participation of all the countries which are affected [but] in some cases the chief beneficiary may not be the country in which the projects are located." In short, a regional approach would favor the biggest Mekong basin countries—Vietnam and Thailand—while inflicting high costs on the smaller, less developed Cambodia.

A major cause of the deepening hostility between even to consider regional commitments that promise only marginal national benefits. Last May representatives of Vietnam, Laos and the right-wing military government of Thailand subordinated their ideological differences to their common economic interests, and met in Bangkok to discuss reactivating the Mekong Committee, originally established with strong American support.

Cambodia boycotted the talks, and many experts agree Khmer Rouge policy is understandable in terms of Cambodian national interest. If regional plans for Mekong development were implemented, the Cambodians would be tied inescapably to a huge economic venture that would compromise their sovereignty—already eroded by centuries of Thai and Vietnamese encroachment.

With Vietnam and Thailand relying on installations deep inside Cambodia, the Cambodian leaders would face the choice of serving their rivals' interests—or facing the military and political consequences if they did not. There is little doubt what the consequences might be. Vietnam and Thailand together have a population of some 90-95 million people. The Cambodians number less than eight million.

Significant oil deposits.

While the dispute over the Mekong is a quarrel over Indochina's life blood, the equally intractable Vietnamese-Cambodian dispute over control of the Gulf of Thailand is a division over both countries' aspirations to develop into modern industrial nations. Lying beneath the disrupted waters off Vietnam and Cambodia are oil deposits of significant, if still indeterminate, size and value.

Cambodian fears were raised last year when Vietnam and Thailand announced competing claims to offshore areas that would have left Cambodia in control of only a narrow triangle of the sea and seabed off its coast. And Phnom Penh now charges that the last attempt to negotiate this issue with the Vietnamese in May 1976 broke down when Vietnam appeared to be pushing for "annexation of a big part of the seas of Cambodia."

Revealing the importance it attaches to the off-shore dispute, Vietnam last summer assigned its chief delegate to the Law of the Sea Conference to the Vietnamese embassy in Phnom Penh. But as veteran Indochina correspondent Nayan Chanda points out, "The goodwill required to solve such conflicting claims disappears in inverse proportion with the possibility of striking oil."

As with Mekong development plans, flare-ups in the border fighting are clearly related to the dispute over off-shore waters. It is known now that conflict over the maritime boundary provoked Cambodian-Vietnamese fighting on islands in the Gulf of Thailand as early as 1975, just after U.S.-backed forces were defeated in both countries. Since then border battles have punctuated an escalating war of diplomatic communiques. The Vietnamese announced their claim to a 200-mile off-shore

economic zone in May 1977, just after a major Cambodian border offensive.

The Cambodians first openly named the Vietnamese as the adversary in the border war when Vietnam's foreign minister was signing joint communiques with non-communist Thailand and Indonesia pledging peaceful negotiations over maritime disputes. Cambodia broke diplomatic relations with Vietnam last Dec. 31—the same day Vietnam, Laos and Thailand established an "interim" Mekong committee that Cambodia has refused to join.

Self-reliance vs. a delicate balance.

At the heart of the dispute over both oil and water is a deepening ideological dispute over the proper way to implement communism in an Asian setting. The Vietnamese favor a delicate balancing act of self-reliance and widely diversified economic and diplomatic relations aimed at preserving their sovereignty.

The Khmer Rouge, who want Cambodia to be a closed, fiercely self-reliant society like Albania, accuse the Vietnamese of being entirely too pragmatic—especially when Cambodian interests are at stake.

Hatreds began to grow between the two revolutionary movements as early as the 1954 Geneva conference, when Ho Chi Minh and Pham Van Dong agreed to Soviet and Chinese, as well as French and American, demands that the Cambodian communist movement be entirely disbanded as a trade-off for concessions in Vietnam and Laos. Again in 1973, the Khmer Rouge charge, the Vietnamese betrayed Cambodian interests by negotiating with Henry Kissinger a ceasefire in Vietnam that left the U.S. free to continue bombing Cambodia.

But like the disputes over oil and water, these issues go far to explain why the Cambodian leaders believe they must fend strictly for themselves. Despite Sihanouk's skillful neutralist diplomacy, the prevailing international order since Cambodia's independence in 1953 has offered them no protection from either big power deals at Geneva or outright invasion, as with the 1970 Nixon "incursion."

And what was true then is true today. Regional development plans, like maritime negotiations, follow international rules that favor bigger, more developed nations over Cambodia's own interests.

The result is that while the ruling ideology has changed dramatically in Cambodia, the unyielding policies on border questions and regional relations have not. Cambodian radio broadcasts today ridicule the Vietnamese communists for accepting investment from capitalist countries and for their attempts to establish normal relations with the U.S.

The "Vietnamese enemy," a recent Khmer Rouge broadcast proclaimed, "will destroy himself for he is following a dead-end, adventurous policy." The broadcasts have also repeatedly stressed the charge that the fight with Vietnam is not over a few acres of border territory, but the fate of all Cambodia. Prince Sihanouk made similar accusations against South Vietnam when it was a beachhead of U.S. military power.

In 1969, a year before he was deposed by the U.S.-backed Lon Nol, neutralist Sihanouk's house organ editorialized that "the Thais and the Vietnamese...never cease to avow their good intentions toward Cambodia, their desire to settle once and for all this frontier problem in a friendly spirit...but we know from experience that methods begun in this manner lead inevitably to the annexation of the areas, then the provinces..."

"The actual frontier itself is the Khmer's last line of resistance. To accept proposals to negotiate...would be a tacit acknowledgement of eventual defeat."

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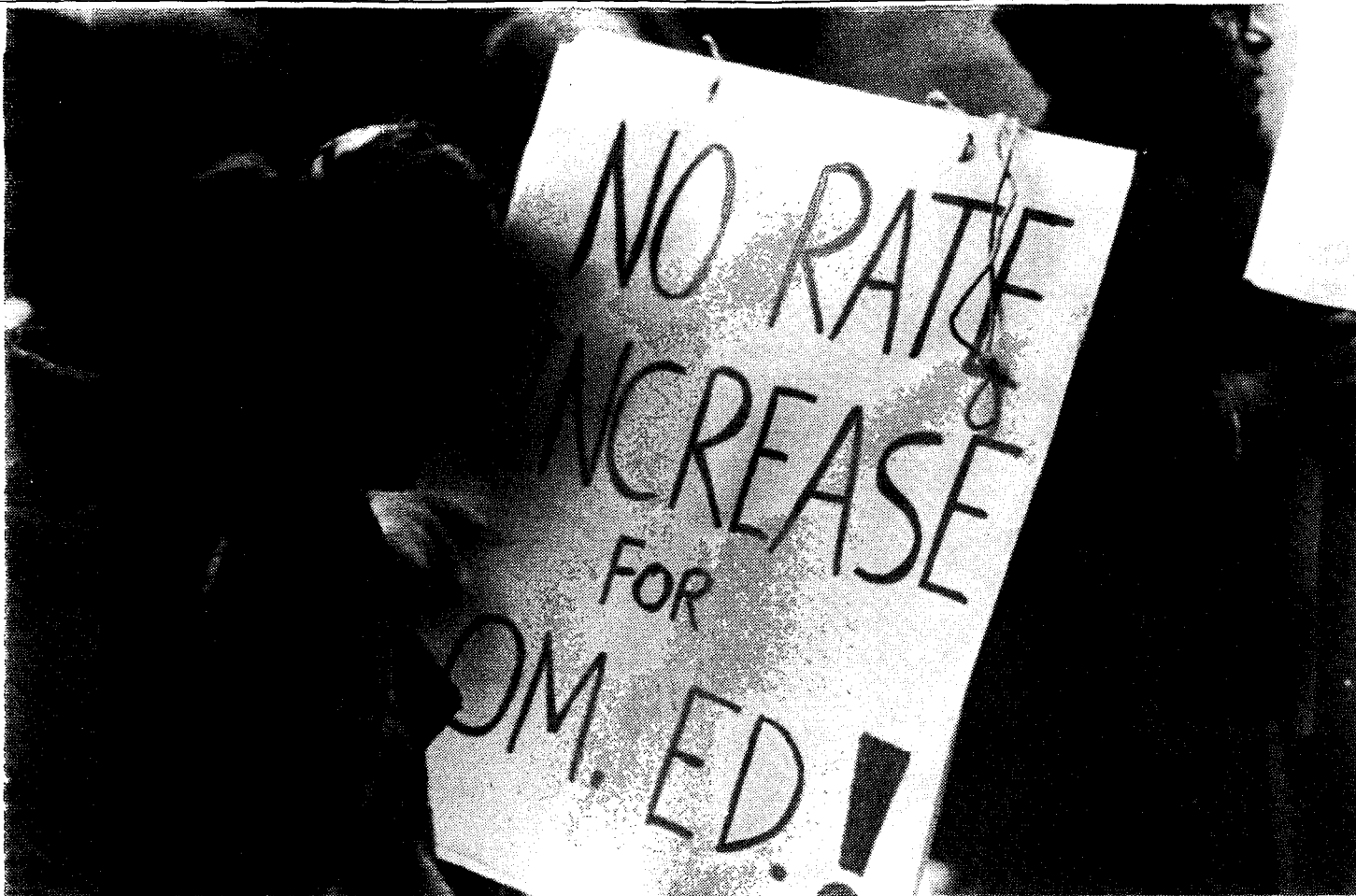
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Warren Friedman

Citizen/Labor Coalition Takes on 'Big Energy' Coalition

By David Moberg

WASHINGTON

NORMALLY VERY LITTLE GOES on in the obscure, narrow hallway outside Room S-334 of the nation's Capitol to disturb the members of the House and Senate who have been conferring there privately since December, deciding precisely how many billions of dollars should be transferred out of consumers' pockets and into the coffers of the natural gas companies.

But on April 20 the corridor was jammed and noisy. The 60 or so people waiting there weren't high school seniors studying "how a bill becomes a law"—even if they had just posed for pictures on the Capitol steps. They were unusually experienced demonstrators—top union officers and staff organizers, leaders and directors of many of the country's strongest statewide federations of community organizations, lobbyists from more than a dozen environmental, energy and consumer groups, and veterans all of a multitude of campaigns against corporate power. Less than an hour before they had publicly announced the formation of a new Citizen/Labor Energy Coalition. Having actively fought the energy companies and much of Carter's national energy plan before singly, they were already acting together.

William Winpisinger, the good-humored but tough-talking president of both the coalition and the 900,000-member International Association of Machinists, was standing beside the door, intently patting his arm. Next to him were his community action organizer, George Robinson, ecologist and author Barry Commoner, Energy Action lobbyist Jim Flug, and Heather Booth, director of the Midwest Academy, the organizer training school that had taken the initiative in assembling the coalition over a year earlier.

West Virginia Congressman Harley Staggers, the white-haired chairman of the conference committee and a longtime opponent of natural gas deregulation who recently switched his vote, stepped through the crowd. Winpisinger introduced himself, stating the Coalition's purpose: "I hope you can open this up to the public, Mr. Chairman."

Staggers promptly told Winpisinger that "if you were in there there'd be no talking and nothing discussed."

"It seems essential that our friends on

the committee know that we support all of those willing to stand fast on behalf of the American consumers to stop this unconscionable ripoff we face from the energy companies."

A loud cheer went up from the crowd, part of which was itching to break into the song they'd practiced earlier (to the tune of "Daisy, Daisy"): "Harley, Harley, give us your answer true/What's your secret? What do you plan to do?/The price of gas is rising—we know you're compromising/So hide no more, open the door/Oh,

The Citizen/Labor Energy Coalition hopes to unite the clout of labor, knowledge of public interest groups and numbers of citizens' groups.

Harley, it's up to you."

"Now, wait a minute," the veteran politician objected. "You're making my speech... I've been fighting for 30 years to keep regulation on gas and the gas companies have fought me and all big business organizations have. You can count on me."

"So let's open up the committee and have it in public," Flug demanded.

"And no deregulation," Booth added.

"So you don't want a bill," Staggers replied.

"We think no bill would be preferable to a bad bill—on gas," Winpisinger answered, with echoes and cheers from the crowd.

The public would understand.

Then Flug and Staggers had the sort of exchange that could and should have gone on in the conference committee. Staggers defended his capitulation on natural gas deregulation as necessary in order for the federal government to get jurisdiction over intrastate gas. Flug maintained that with existing law and aggressive action by the new Federal Energy Regulatory Commission the interstate gas supply could be expanded without giving the energy companies an extra \$12 to \$55 billion dollars for gas between now and 1985 (depending on what bill is passed) and thereby costing an average family as much as several thousand dollars.

"The President said that it was all right to [meet] in private because the people wouldn't understand what was going on in there," Flug said, gesturing toward the

closed doors through which gas company defender Sen. Henry Jackson (D-WA) just emerged. "Well, the people understand that the reason it has to go on in private is because if it was going on in public they would understand."

"We want a good bill, not this bill," Flug said.

"Well, we can't get a good bill," Staggers finally admitted, then he headed off to vote in the committee, which agreed later the same day on a costly phased deregulation proposal.

The action, as Heather Booth said later outside the Capitol, "embodied a pre-taste of what this coalition will do. It was the clout of labor that allowed us to get the meeting in the first place. It was the knowledge of the public interest groups that allowed us to identify what the issues were. And it was the numbers of the citizens or organizations out in the communities that posed any threat."

Never before.

It was an accomplishment simply to pull together the 60-plus organizations that took part in the Coalition planning conference April 19-20, something of a birthday gift to President Carter on the first anniversary of the announcement of his energy plan. Even if the principles of agreement are elementary and the commitments of some groups not yet solid, the Coalition's overall direction sets it fundamentally in opposition to the tack taken by the energy corporations and the Carter administration. Never before has such a great variety of groups joined forces behind a common plan on the energy issues in defense of popular needs.

Moreover, the implications of the Coalition's position point not only toward a different energy policy but also toward a broader reconstruction of the American economy. "Energy policy must be regarded as an avenue to broader national goals," its official policy statement declares. "The policies and programs which are adopted in order to resolve pressing energy issues, both national and inter-

national, will in large part determine the economic and political direction of the country in the next decade and beyond."

Specifically the Coalition's four points of agreement state that "energy prices must be just and reasonable for consumers; "energy policies must promote economic health by the preservation and creation of jobs;" "concentrated economic power in the energy industry must be broken up;" and "energy must be safe."

Rather than focussing on the technicalities of energy technology or legislation, the coalition will translate energy issues into terms that make immediate sense to the American people: prices, jobs, stable communities, safety, and useful goods and services.

Although the Coalition is still in formation, union participants in the planning conference included the Machinists—one of the prime movers of the effort—the Sheet Metal Workers, the AFL-CIO, the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers, the East and West Coast longshoremen, the Steelworkers, AFSCME (public workers), the United Auto Workers, Aluminum Workers and the Retail Clerks.

Among the mass-based community organizations were Massachusetts Fair Share, Illinois Public Action Council, Ohio Public Interest Campaign, Vermont Alliance, Citizens Action League and the Campaign for Economic Democracy from California, ACORN, Oregon Fair Share and Carolina Action.

Representatives from public interest groups included the Consumer Federation of America, Environmental Action Foundation, Energy Action, several Nader-initiated groups, Environmentalists for Full Employment, National League of Cities, Urban Environment Conference and Rural America. Although the planning conference nearly tripled in size from its original expectations to 170 people, nearly 200 others had to be turned away because of inadequate space.

Strength through unity.

Winning participation of labor unions in the coalition had been the primary and most challenging task of the Coalition organizers. "The role of labor is really different now," Commoner said at the close of the meeting. "None of these proposals would have the level of political impact necessary without labor. This is symptomatic of a real change in labor's attitude toward the problems of the production system."

Continued on page 4.

IN THE NATION

SPYING

Congress examines utility spying

By Seth Derish

A SAN FRANCISCO PRIVATE INTELLIGENCE agency here that spied on anti-nuclear power activists for Pacific Gas & Electric and the Georgia Power Company has refused to turn over records to a House of Representatives subcommittee.

Last September the Oversight and Investigations subcommittee of the House Commerce committee secretly began investigating national intelligence gathering by the nuclear power industry. Under the chairmanship of Rep. John Moss (D-CA), the subcommittee issued subpoenas in February to PG&E, the Georgia Power Co., the Atomic Industrial Forum, a trade association of the nuclear industry, the Law Enforcement Intelligence Unit, a California agency privately funded by law enforcement personnel, the Department of Energy and Research West, a private "anti-terrorist" intelligence agency.

According to a subcommittee staff member, all are complying with the subpoenas except Research West.

Documents from the Federal Power Commission show that PG&E paid Research West \$88,907 for unspecified intelligence from 1971 through 1976. An additional \$4,700 was paid last year, according to the staff member. PG&E also dished out \$30,150 to other private detective agencies between 1973 and 1976. "We don't know exactly what Research West does and their articles of incorporation are very hazy," the staff member said.

The subcommittee knows so little of Research West's work, according to a source in Washington, that it has sent a team of investigators to San Francisco to find out if the firm compiled "ill-begotten information to give to utilities for a price."

Research West president Patricia Atthowe appeared before the subcommittee March 3 and 17. Both times she refused to turn over documents relating to

her firm's investigation of anti-nuclear power activists. She claimed to be a journalist who is protecting confidential sources. Atthowe told Washington reporters, "If the subcommittee wants to purchase my services, I'll send them a bill." Moss has initiated formal contempt of Congress proceedings against Atthowe. It is expected to be several weeks until the citation is issued by the Justice Department. If convicted, she might spend up to one year in prison and pay a \$1,000 fine.

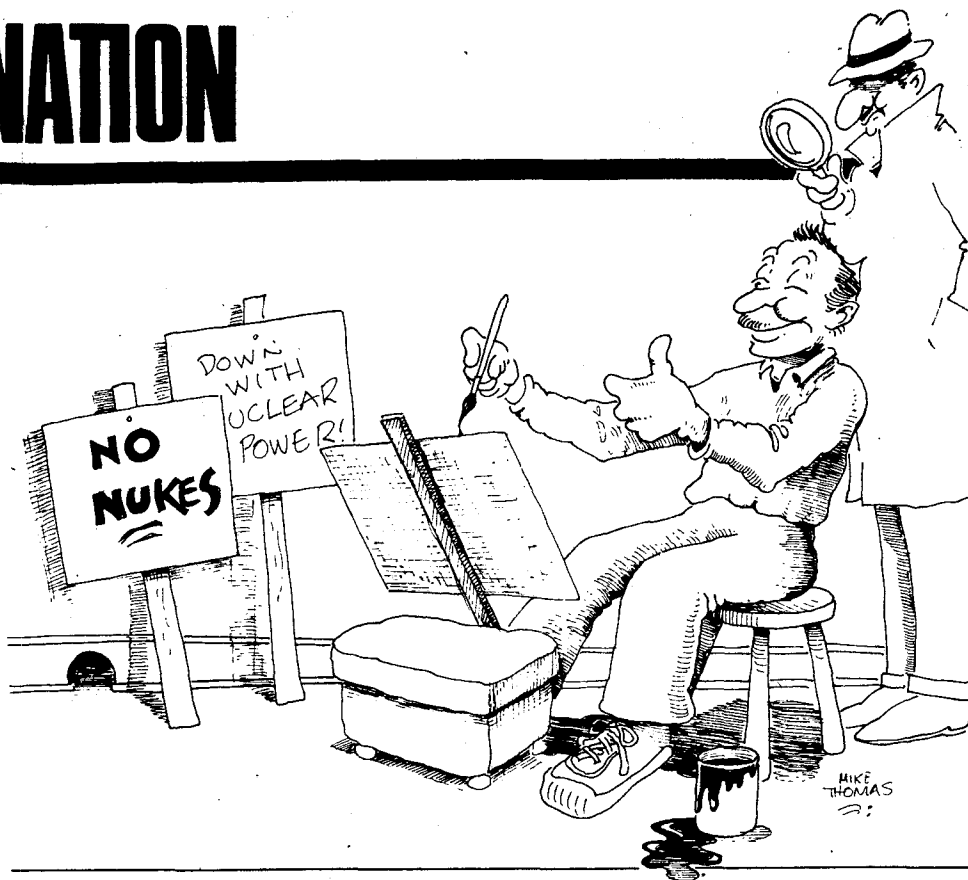
Atthowe's attorney, Philadelphia constitutional law expert Leonard Wolff, told the *San Francisco Chronicle* that the subpoena "may be a clear invasion of the power of the press. She [Atthowe] does a lot of writing for magazines like *Reader's Digest* and *Parent's* magazine." Wolff also fears political retaliation if Atthowe testifies.

When contacted by IN THESE TIMES, Atthowe was asked for dates and names of articles she authored in the two publications. She replied that her firm has done research for *Reader's Digest* but that she has never had any stories appear under her name.

She told the subcommittee that she also served as a news source for the *San Francisco Examiner* from 1969 until last year under an annual retainer contract.

Atthowe claims that Moss is going after "the victims of terrorism instead of the terrorists." "PG&E is the major terrorist victim in the U.S.," she says. But the subcommittee subpoena specifically excludes files on groups such as the New World Liberation Front, who have claimed responsibility for bombings of PG&E facilities in the past.

Moss is concerned about allegations that utilities or their agents have "unduly intruded into the privacy of Americans," especially "critics of commercial nuclear power plants." If these allegations are true, Moss wants to enact legislation to "protect citizens from undue snooping, prying or record-keeping by utilities." He is also concerned about the quality of intelligence used to safeguard



PG&E has paid more than \$90,000 to one company since 1971 for intelligence gathering activities against nuclear opponents.

nuclear facilities and what utility users are paying for this service.

The subcommittee investigation stems from the much-publicized use of Research West last year by the Georgia Power Co., on the advice of PG&E, to investigate radicals who moved from the Bay Area to Georgia. The subcommittee is requesting Research West's files on Ralph Nader, the Abalone and Clamshell Alliances, members of Congress and other critics of nuclear power.

Atthowe claims that she only uses police and congressional sources for her business and sends "people to meetings" to gather information.

While internal PG&E memos obtained by IN THESE TIMES show that PG&E was mainly concerned with "monitoring" anti-nuclear forces and presenting a "pro-nuclear" position, speeches and papers written by Atthowe indicate that the PG&E-hired agency was possibly used for more direct action against anti-nuclear groups.

Atthowe made no distinctions between the Symbionese Liberation Army and the research-oriented North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA) at a convention of the Federal Bar Association held in San Juan, Puerto Rico, last September. She said the organizations are not "small tactical units, but a closed corporation between San Francisco, New York, and Havana." Research West de-

scribes itself as a strategic expert in the field of terrorism.

In an editorial published in the September 1977 issue of a trade publication, *Security Management*, Atthowe outlined possible tactics to be used against "terrorist" groups. "Perhaps it is time to re-evaluate the necessities of professional intelligence, surveillance, wiretapping, and infiltration as non-negotiable tools in the war against terrorism," she wrote.

PG&E, which controls power in 47 central and northern California counties, was a prime opponent of Proposition 13 in June of 1976. The initiative, sponsored by Project Survival, an environmental group that once boasted 10,000 members, would have banned nuclear plant construction in California until the safety systems for the storage of nuclear wastes were proven. Project Survival president Jim Burch told ITT that his organization spotted several PG&E information agents at their meetings during the height of the campaign. The initiative was defeated.

Since 1951, PG&E has promoted and built nuclear power plants in California. They have also pledged \$10,000,000 over a ten-year period to help finance the controversial Clinch River (Tenn.) plant.

Subcommittee hearings are expected to culminate in June.

Seth Derish is a free-lance writer in Chico, Calif., and a reporter for the Chico News & Review.

Coalition

Continued from page 3.

Commoner touched on the strengths that the Coalition gains through welding together several slightly different energy constituencies in the text of a speech he gave at the meeting: "The real interests of the American people are represented here.... The unions speak to an absolutely basic need—that energy, on which the operation of the entire system of production depends must be constantly available, free of disruptions that throw people out of work and wreck the economy. The community organizations speak to an equally basic need—that if energy is to be accessible we must be able to afford it. The public interest groups, who are seeking to explain the complexities of the energy problem to the people of the U.S., also speak to a crucial need—for developing renewable, economic, safe ways of producing energy and thrifty ways of using it."

Besides taking its stand against deregulation of natural gas prices, the Coalition supported a broad range of well-known utility reforms (including an end to promotional rates for big users and adoption of lifeline rates for residential customers) and advocated new restrictions

on energy corporation powers (a grab-bag covering anti-trust action, cost-based price and profit limits, tax reform and independent disclosure of information on energy reserves and corporate economic conditions by the government).

One of the touchier sessions, according to observers, covered conservation, jobs and alternative energy. All planning conference participants had been advised in advance that the Coalition would avoid taking a stand on nuclear power. Although it is one of the most central energy issues facing the country, the Coalition could not have been as broad with either a pro-nuclear or anti-nuclear plank. However, in drafting a position on alternative sources, Coalition organizers had stressed how solar energy and conservation would generate more employment than other alternatives.

But a few union representatives with direct interests in nuclear power or a deep commitment to the AFL-CIO position that production of all forms of energy—nuclear and wind, oil and solar—should be expanded felt that the draft position was a one-sided pro-solar statement.

Negotiations continued until 1 a.m., when agreement was reached on a fairly curt, non-controversial statement in favor of accelerating "the development of alternative sources of energy...beyond the meager steps taken by the Carter administration," including Coalition commitment to a campaign to "promote the

development of solar energy and other alternative energy sources."

Although the negotiators agreed to stick together on the points everyone supported, the nuclear genie may haunt the Coalition until it is clear that nuclear power will not satisfy two of the Coalition's main principles—that energy should be safe and affordable.

Building commitment.

The main task of the Coalition leaders now is to provoke heartfelt commitment of the member groups to the points of common cause. That may keep the potential rifts buried until differences can be worked out in the task forces on specific topics.

Community-based groups, for example, want to make sure that programs of the Coalition can help build their base and not just divert energy into support for Washington lobbying groups. Members concerned with thwarting oil company power will have to work out their differences over whether a model of full, free competition among small producers is a practicable or even desirable goal. The internal AFL-CIO political squabbles between the old-guard Meany leaders and the emerging progressive alignment around outspoken, independent Winpisinger will never be completely absent. Some observers thought that division played a role in the discussion of nuclear and solar power. lar power.

Among potential allies still on the outside there are not only many unions and community groups but also the anti-nuclear grass-roots alliances (such as the Clamshell Alliance) as well as environmentalist groups (such as Friends of the Earth and the Sierra Club) that see higher energy prices as a desirable way to force conservation rather than a monkey wrench in the economy and a burden on the poor.

The Coalition is a major achievement and a much-needed political counterbalance to the steadily increasing weight of the energy corporations, despite the potential division, the issues avoided and the imaginative plans shelved as too daring for the moment. Ultimately environmentalists and community groups will be forced by their alliance with the unions to consider the impact of their proposals on employment. Unions will be kept sensitive to the need for lower prices and the urgency of environmental issues. Both community groups and unions should learn from the public interest groups how their aims can be met through a planned, deliberate transition to a solar energy economy. Finally there may be a politically powerful force behind a solid people's energy program.

"We have needed your coalition for years," Sen. Edward Kennedy said in a rousing endorsement of the Citizen/Labor Energy Coalition. "I'm so glad you're here, but what took you so long?"

TRIALS

Vietnam spy case will raise serious constitutional issue

The Humphrey-Truong defense is expected to raise a serious challenge to the national security nature of the case and the government's right to use warrantless wiretaps.

By Jeffrey Stein

ALEXANDRIA, VA.

THIS COLONIAL-STYLE CITY ON the banks of the Potomac, where citizens are quick to point out their Revolutionary War heritage is about to become the site of a civil liberties battle the founding fathers prepared for almost 200 years ago.

"Perhaps it is a universal truth," remarked James Madison to Thomas Jefferson on May 13, 1778, "that the loss of liberty at home is to be charged to provisions against danger, real or pretended, from abroad."

That, say the defenders of David Truong, a 32-year-old Vietnamese man and former antiwar activist who was arrested with a State department employee on charges of spying for Hanoi in January, is the proper context for the trial that will begin May 1.

So far, the facts of the case have taken a back seat to the sharp legal skirmishes between the defense and the government over constitutional issues surrounding government surveillance and wiretapping without warrants, the reorganization of the intelligence community, and the current state of U.S.-Vietnamese relations.

According to government affidavits, the FBI opened its investigation in February 1976. It was then that a Vietnamese woman who had apparently also worked for the CIA as a double agent told the FBI that David Truong, the son of a former candidate for the presidency of South Vietnam who was living in Washington and working on the normalization of relations between the U.S. and Vietnam, had asked her to carry some documents to Vietnamese officials in Paris.

During the ensuing months, the government says, Truong gave the woman packages to take to Paris, and Vietnamese officials there gave packages to her to carry back to Truong in Washington.

Each time, the woman would first take them to the FBI, which would open them and photograph the contents, before returning them to her for the completion of her "mission."

Last month, the Vietnamese woman was identified by the government as Dung Krall, the daughter of a former ambassador from the South Vietnamese liberation forces and its Provisional Revolutionary Government. Krall is married to an American Navy intelligence officer.

Warrantless surveillance.

A few months after the case was opened FBI agents secretly entered Truong's Washington apartment without a warrant and placed listening devices on the walls and in the telephone. At about the same time covert television surveillance of Ronald L. Humphrey, in his office at the U.S. Information Agency, was personally approved by Attorney General Griffin Bell and President Carter—also without warrant. Humphrey, the government charges, had supplied Truong with classified State department cables that ended up on the hands of Vietnamese officials.

Both Humphrey and Truong have entered pleas of not guilty. Humphrey has admitted that he supplied information to

Truong, but that, one, he didn't suspect Truong of being a Vietnamese agent, and two, he clipped off the headings and classification markings of the documents before giving them to Truong.

The defense, headed by well-known activist attorney Michael Tigar, has already scored some preliminary victories. One important—although admittedly partial—victory came when Judge Albert V. Bryant instructed the prosecution that it could not introduce in court any evidence collected through warrantless "national security" taps and bugs gathered after the Justice department had decided to pursue a criminal prosecution.

Currently, the government must obtain a warrant before using electronic surveillance in a criminal prosecution. In "national security" cases, however, the law is hazy, with the Carter administration arguing that no warrant is presently required.

In the Humphrey-Truong case Judge Bryant ruled that evidence collected through a "national security" tap after the decision to prosecute had been made could not be admitted, but evidence obtained prior to that decision could be used. The ruling cannot be appealed until the case is decided. Depending on that decision, either the government or the defendants may decide to appeal, which would leave it up to the Supreme Court to decide the legality of warrantless taps.

In the meantime, legislation has been introduced in Congress to establish specific procedures for the use of electronic surveillance in national security cases. The Senate overwhelmingly approved a bill April 20 that would require intelligence agencies to obtain permission from one of seven selected federal judges before they could use electronic surveillance techniques in national security cases. (Ironically, considering the Humphrey-Truong prosecution, the bill had administration support.) The House is now considering similar legislation.

Challenge to "national security."

The Humphrey-Truong defense is expected to raise a serious challenge to the "national security" nature of the case as well.

"The 'national security secrets' allegedly purloined by Humphrey for Truong do not, they say, in fact, relate directly to the national defense. None of the documents cited in the indictments deal exclusively with military subjects, at least as they are captioned in the government's inventory. Most appear to be the summary observations of American diplomats stationed in Asia, such as a conversation with a foreign diplomat who had recently visited Hanoi. So the question is: Can this be espionage?

Secondly, they say, the government has decided to produce the documents in question in court. But, if these are vital secrets, how can they be divulged by the government without damage to the national security?

The defense may also ask to have the two cases tried separately.

Less clear than the constitutional questions are those dealing with the motives behind the decision to prosecute this case and the diplomatic ramifications of its prosecution.

Named in the Jan. 31 indictments of



Dinh Ba Thi, the ambassador to the UN from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, (above) was named as an unindicted co-conspirator in the Humphrey-Truong indictments.

Humphrey and Truong was an unindicted co-conspirator, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam's ambassador to the United Nations, Dinh Ba Thi. FBI affidavits assert that Thi personally received classified information from Truong. Thi was subsequently asked to leave the country, an unprecedented action.

The unusually harsh course of action taken by the State department in demanding Thi's ouster has been seen by some as evidence that the Vietnam war is still being fought here, if not in Vietnam itself.

Le Anh Tu, a Vietnamese friend of David Truong and a veteran peace activist, says, "I think there is probably disagreement within the U.S. government on how fast to normalize relations with Vietnam, and I think there's a group of people who continue to feel vindictive; people who have devoted virtually their whole lives to fighting for the wrong side and who feel extremely embittered and who hate the Vietnamese. I suppose," she said,

"it's like the French who lived in Algeria for a long time."

Some of those at the top of the American hierarchy who gave the green light on key decisions in the Truong case were, of course, deeply involved in the prosecution of the war, including Cyrus Vance, now Secretary of State, formerly Secretary of the Army (1962-64), Deputy Secretary of Defense (1967), and Paris Peace Conference negotiator (1968-69).

To many close observers of the government's prosecution, the trial of Truong and Humphrey has taken on an Alice-in-Wonderland quality. Confessing that he had been wrong on Vietnam and many other issues of the past decade because he tended to assume the government was right, *Washington Post* columnist Richard Cohen was moved to observe succinctly that of the three parties to this week's contest—Truong, Humphrey, and the government—only one had a criminal record.

Jeffrey Stein is a reporter in Washington.

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IN THE WORLD

MIDEAST

Israelis press for new peace move

By Gidion Eshet

JERUSALEM

WITH WAR PREPAREDNESS almost a national habit of the people of Israel it is not surprising that soldiers' or potential soldiers' political views cause havoc.

This was the case in 1970 when a group of high school students aged 16-18 sent a letter to then Prime Minister Golda Meir saying that her policies toward the Arabs caused them to doubt the justification of the probable next war. We will not fight wholeheartedly, they wrote.

Meir dismissed the dissidents as a negligible fringe group. Begin did the same a few months ago when he received a similar letter. The 1978 high school student protest caused a chain of reactions. This culminated two weeks ago in a demonstration of 30,000 in Tel Aviv called by Peace Now group.

It all began when about 300 reserve officers sent a letter to Begin saying that he should express willingness to compromise over the West Bank. The official Begin policy is that Israel's maximum concessions in that area is the autonomy plan under which Israel will retain control over the territory but allow the local popula-

tion some sort of self-rule, excluding monetary, defense and foreign affairs. This position has been the main obstacle to reaching an agreement with Egypt on a set of principles for further negotiations.

by Begin's Herut supporters. It held a demonstration of 40,000 supporting Begin in Tel Aviv.

Meanwhile ten Knesset members out of 120 joined the Peace Now initiative, in-

The Peace Now group led a rally of 30,000 in Tel Aviv. Labor party and DMC leaders along with prominent Americans are backing the initiative.

The officers group called on Begin to change his views to their position called "territorial compromise" on the West Bank.

More than the desire to appease Sadat was behind the officers' letter. They also fear that holding the territories will enlarge the Arab population of Israel thus endangering the "Jewish character of the state of Israel."

After Begin dismissed them, Peace Now began a national campaign. About 300,000 citizens have now signed the petition based on the letter to Begin. The right reacted immediately. A group calling itself "Secure Peace" was organized

including members of the opposition Labour party. Among them are former ministers Abba Eban and Haim Bar-Lev and two members of the coalition partner Democratic Movement for Change. They were joined by 37 Americans including economist Kenneth Arrow, novelist Saul Bellow, Walter Lacquer, Irving Howe, Daniel Bell and Seymour Lipset.

The left in Israel refrained from open support of the officers' initiative. Shelli, the socialist Zionist party headed by Arie Eliav and Meir Paul disagrees with the view that all the West Bank (together with the Gaza Strip) should be handed over to the Palestinians as part of a Palestinian

state. The compromise clause, which is part of both Labour and DMC platforms, calls for parts of the West Bank, notably the area along the Jordan Valley, to be held by Israel endlessly. The Democratic Front for Peace and Equality also opposes the "Jewish character of Israel" reasoning. It holds the view that this is a racist position that looks upon any Arab as a danger for Israel.

To discredit the Peace Now opposition Begin says that accepting their program would mean retreating to the pre-1967 war boundaries. However, the group claims this is not their intention. Politically they put themselves in line with the Labour and DMC platforms, as they openly said after meeting the Deputy Prime Minister, DMC's leader Yigael Yadin.

Begin's supporters argue that the officers' program of compromises in the West Bank, the Labour party position, did not bring peace closer while that party was in power. The Arabs want all of the West Bank, a claim Peace Now rejects.

Nevertheless, Peace Now initiated by the reserve officers, is presently the most outspoken opponent of the Begin government. Being non-partisan enables it to mobilize opponents from different parties and to appear to be above traditional politics.

"THIRD WORLD" MYTHS

Populist nationalism submerges socialism

By Richard L. Sklar

REVOLUTION IN THE THIRD WORLD: Myths and Prospects

By Gerard Chaliand
Viking Press, New York, \$11.95

This book is an appraisal of the 20th century revolution against alien, colonial, and semicolonial domination in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Audacious? Indeed. But the author, Gerard Chaliand, knows whereof he writes. Two of his previous books—*Armed Struggle in Africa* and *The Peasants of North Vietnam*—are classics of their kind: reports of revolutionary life by a deeply sympathetic observer, every bit as realistic as he is committed to revolutionary goals and values.

To put his latest achievement into perspective: I know of nary an American author who could write about the entire Third World with as sure a common touch as that of Chaliand. A few other Europeans may possess the same rare combination of comprehensive knowledge and universal empathy. None, however, uses it better than Chaliand, as he guides us expertly and with ease through the everyday lives and selected social disorders of those who were honored by Fanon as "the wretched of the earth." His plain words are meant to dispel populist myths that envelop and enervate revolutionary thought and practice. Four such myths are effectively debunked.

First, the very expression "Third World" is mythical insofar as it attributes "a semblance of unity" to the highly diversified collection of peoples and states that fall within the meaning of the concept by any definition. Second, it is simply mythical to believe that rural-based guerillas are presently poised to spearhead social revolutions in nonindustrial countries. On the contrary, there are precious few countries where the revolutionary potential of an ex-

isting guerilla movement is even credible. The weakness of Latin American revolutionary movements, in particular, are vividly demonstrated by Chaliand with special reference to the paradigmatic case of Columbia.

Third, Chaliand exposes as a myth the notion that "national" revolutions normally evolve into "social" revolutions. "National" revolutions do assert local control over the resources of a country. They also create a new ruling class, centered upon an "administrative bourgeoisie" that absorbs and displaces the old ruling class, as in Algeria, Egypt, and Peru. When this happens, "social" revolution, which implies class struggle and a basic change in the class content of power, hardly gets off the ground.

Fourth, the belief that revolutions led by vanguard parties produce freedom is sadly mythical. Vanguard parties in power do not create free societies. Their invariable product, according to Chaliand, is bureaucratic despotism. Freedom for the working class cannot be attained by mere nationalism, or the takeover of management by a state at the expense of private ownership. Socialist freedom means that working people themselves will become the effective managers of industrial and political life. With all due respect to China, Chaliand does not see this happening anywhere in the world. In all of the so-called "people's democracies," worker control is prevented by one or another form of centralized "political monopoly."

Four myths down; but there are two more that are not debunked in this book, and should be. One that lies undisturbed by Chaliand is the myth of capitalist imperialism as it is propagated by those who call themselves "dependency" theorists. This myth posits the subservience of local ruling classes in nonindustrial countries to the dominant classes of the industrial countries. Its net effect is to block comprehension of the nature and strength of



In his latest book, Gerard Chaliand (above) dispels populist myths that enervate socialist thought and practice. He cautions against viewing "national" revolutions as synonymous with "social" revolutions.

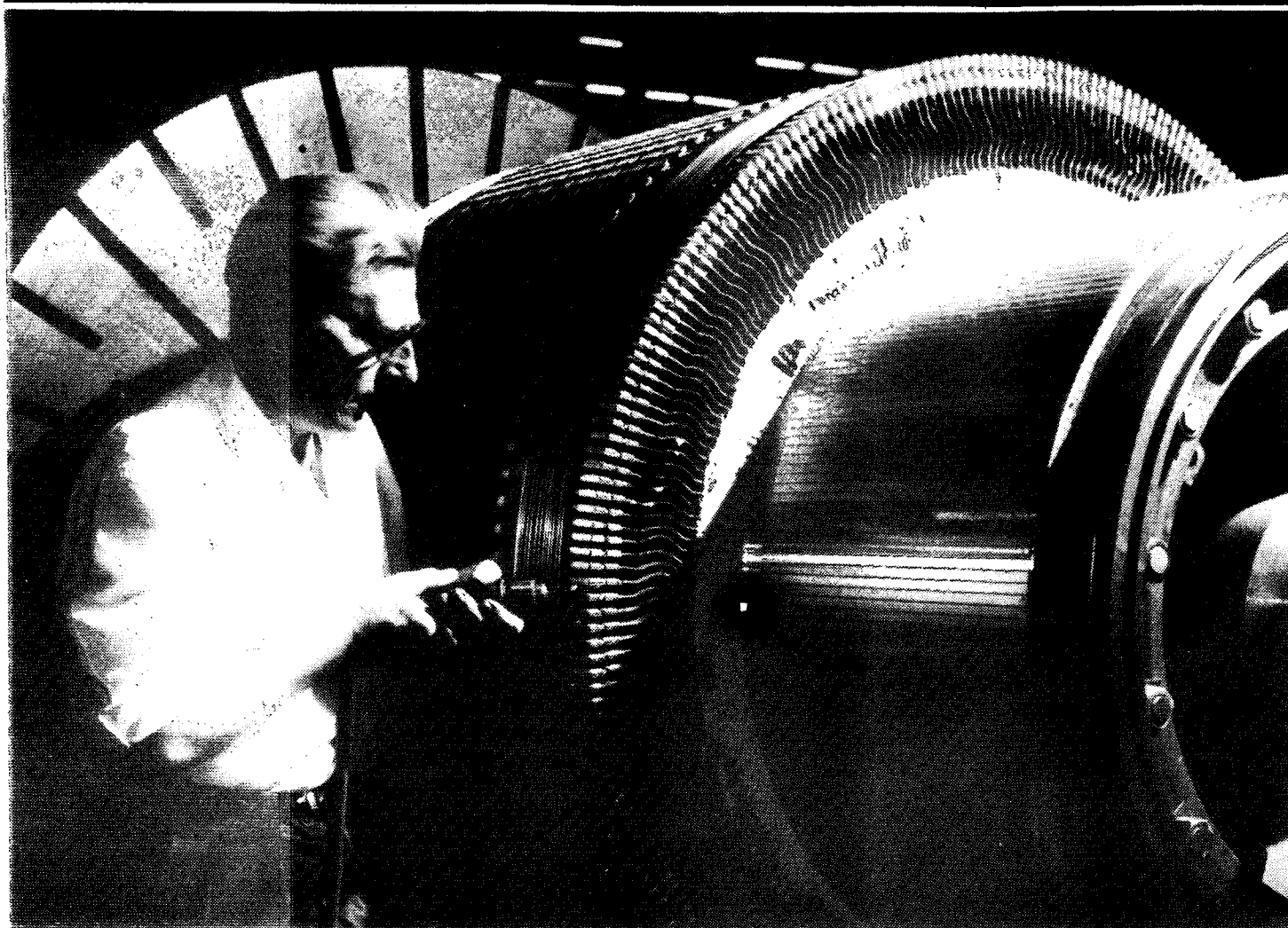
ruling classes in newly developing societies. Chaliand's own stated intent to affirm the primacy of "political considerations" in Third World studies could be used to dispel this confusing myth, which only obscures the entrenchment and staying power of capitalism on a world scale.

Of even greater significance is the undisturbed myth of "bureaucratic" abuse as an explanation for tyranny in the Communist world. Chaliand deplores the perversion of socialism by Communist regimes. But he does not accurately identify its root cause. In his view, "bureaucracy is the central issue." However, the so-called "bureaucratic problem" in contemporary socialist thought should be exposed for what it is: a populist myth that conceals a far better explanation for the

persistence of despotism in socialist countries. Bureaucracy, after all, is an indispensable means for the achievement of social equality. In any society, bureaucracy is abused. In the socialist countries today, bureaucracy and socialism are both badly abused as a direct result of the deprivation of liberty. The myth of "bureaucratic socialism" (implying the possibility of a nonbureaucratic socialist alternative) impairs the ability of socialists to comprehend the nature of these abuses.

The myths that survive in this book, like those that are demolished, are populist myths. Populism, as Chaliand shows, is the graveyard of socialist ideas.

Richard L. Sklar is professor of political science at the University of California, Los Angeles.



SWEDEN

Swedish social democracy heads beyond welfare state

By John D. Stephens

IS THE "REFORMISM" OF NORTH-ern European social democracy the sign of a labor movement fully accommodated to the capitalist system? Swedish events of the '70s have cast serious doubts over this interpretation of social democracy's role in capitalist society.

After almost 40 years in office in which the focus of almost all reform was welfare state expansion and income redistribution, the Swedish Social Democrats have recently refocused their program toward the classical problems of capitalist society. In the early '70s the Swedish labor movement began a campaign to expand employees' power in the enterprise, a campaign that resulted in the passage of a series of laws substantially enlarging employees' decision-making rights. In 1975, LO, the blue-collar trade union central closely associated with the Social Democratic party, proposed a plan for the gradual transfer of stock in all larger enterprises from capital owners to the employees. A revised version of this plan was recently endorsed by the Social Democrats.

Structural changes in the labor force and the growth of white-collar labor organization have allowed the Social Democrats to refocus their program. The decline of the rural sector and the growth of the ranks of nonmanual employees made the latter a much more attractive coalition partner for the Social Democrats than the former. Indeed, this change precipitated the breakup in 1957 of the coalition between the Social Democrats and the Farmers party. Manual and non-manual employees are both propertyless employees, and ultimately this is what the Social Democrats tried to bring out in their policy.

But unless white-collar employees are organized, they remain under the social and political hegemony of capital. The tremendous growth of white-collar labor organization from the mid-'50s decisively changed the balance of power in Swedish society and allowed the Social Democrats to raise the issue of socialism. Today, 70 percent of all white-collar employees and 90 percent of all blue-collar employees in Sweden are organized. This level of labor organization is matched only in



Olof Palme, leader of the Swedish Social Democratic party

The tremendous growth of white-collar labor organization has changed the balance of power in Swedish society.

Norway. Swedish white-collar workers are organized in a separate trade union central, TCO, which promotes a specifically white-collar style of politics: apathy toward wage equalization and even hostility toward high marginal taxation, but support for programs expanding employee control in the enterprise. LO and TCO made an alliance in 1974, calling for a much more radical expansion

of employees' decision-making rights than even the Social Democrats had originally asked for. Since these two organizations represent some three-quarters of the electorate, even the left bourgeois parties, the Liberals and the Center (formerly Farmers) could not afford to ignore them and voted for the LO/TCO position in most cases.

labor legislation passed

in spring 1976 offers an interesting contrast to the German codetermination laws. LO in particular opposed the German-type arrangements because of the dangers of cooptation. Instead they opted for expanding the scope of collective bargaining and, in some cases, transferring decision-making rights to the employees alone.

The employer is obligated to enter negotiation with the union about any change in the management of the enterprise that might affect employees. If no agreement is reached, the employees have the legal right to strike even in ongoing contract periods. The power of the local union is even greater in health and safety issues. And the unions' interpretation of contractual agreements is legally binding until ruled otherwise in the labor court.

The 1975 proposal from LO concerning the collectivization of profits is an even greater departure from past policy of the Swedish labor movement since its passage would ensure the transition of the Swedish economy to a socialist economy. The 1971 LO congress appointed an investigative group to study some of the negative effects of LO's "solidaristic wage policy," which called for equal pay for equal work and equalization between low and high paying jobs regardless of the ability of the employer to pay.

The policy had contributed to higher profits in the strongest sectors of the economy than would be the case if the unions in those sectors were not restrained by the solidaristic wage policy. This, in turn, contributed to increased concentration of already skewed distribution of wealth. The central directive that the congress gave the group was that they should develop a proposal to complement the solidaristic wage policy that would counteract the concentration of wealth. The group was also directed to design the proposal such that it provided for new sources of capital formation and reinforced employees' influence in the enterprise.

The study group's proposal, which was adopted by the LO congress in 1976, would eventually entail the socialization of the Swedish economy. Companies with more than 100 employees would have to transfer 20 percent of their profits in the form of newly-issued shares of stock to "wage earner funds" administered by the unions. The transferred portion of the profit would be new equity capital and would remain in the firm for investment. The voting rights of the stock would go to the unions with the first 20 percent going to the local and the rest to the national. The national would appoint board members in consultation with the local. Dividend income would not be distributed individually but used for various collective services.

At present rates of growth, the more profitable firms would come to be employee-controlled in 20 or 30 years. In 50 or 60 years the Swedish economy would be essentially socialist in that the huge majority of equity capital would be collectively owned.

Election defeat.

Unfortunately, the presentation of the LO proposal was very poorly timed. The Social Democrats had little time to prepare the issue before the September 1976 elections. The employers' federation and the bourgeois parties took the offensive with charges that the wage earner funds amounted to "confiscation," that it would set up an "east state (i.e., East European) type socialism" and even that it would result in the end of democracy in Sweden. The Social Democratic leadership took a defensive posture claiming that an ongoing parliamentary investigation on the question would not be finished until after the next (1979) election, thus they had no set position yet.

The Social Democrats lost the 1976 election. But most evidence shows that the LO proposal played at most a very minor role in the defeat. Of much greater importance were a series of scandals, such as Ingmar Bergman's and Astrid Lingren's confrontation with the tax authorities, which hit Sweden in the spring of 1976, and the atomic energy issue which dominated the last phase of the election campaign.

On the other hand, the wage-earner fund proposal did not help the Social

Continued on page 8

By Tom Appleton

WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

New law aborts women's rights

The country which was the first to enact women's suffrage has passed a "savage, repressive" abortion law.

NEW ZEALAND IS THE ONLY country in the world where gynecologists refer women to the nearest travel agent to get an abortion. It's a cruel joke but it reflects accurately the bitterness of the situation New Zealand women find themselves in since a draconian new abortion law, the Contraception, Sterilization and Abortion Act, took effect April 1.

It is ironic that in the country which 85 years ago was the first in the world to give women the vote this law could be passed, which Dr. Martin Finlay, president of the New Zealand Labour party, has described as "savage, repressive and shamelessly anti-women."

It is now an offense in New Zealand, punishable by a fine of up to NZ\$200, to even think about getting an abortion, irrespective of whether or not a woman is pregnant, and irrespective of whether or not what she does would terminate a pregnancy. (NZ\$1 = \$1.02)

It is now a crime punishable by imprisonment of up to 14 years ("life imprisonment") for anyone (including qualified doctors) to carry out an abortion. Abortion has been equated with murder of a "child that has not become a human being."

It is now possible to be jailed for up to seven years for buying an airline ticket to Australia. Under the newly redefined section 186, "Supplying means of procuring abortion," of the Crimes Act of 1961, any "thing" given a pregnant woman with the intention to procure an abortion carries such punishment.

Rape is now not a grounds for abortion. Nor can an abortion be obtained if it is to be expected that the baby will be born handicapped or physically abnormal.

Non-chemical contraceptives, such as intra-uterine devices, will now be banned as they are now seen as murder-instruments. In other words: women who cannot take the pill for physiological reasons now face an increased risk of unwanted pregnancy.

No rule of law.

No less shocking is the end of the rule of law in New Zealand's courts, brought about by the new act. In British and Commonwealth law it is customary for so serious a verdict as life imprisonment for the accused to have recourse to a court of

law, with all its legalistic safety margins.

Under the new law in New Zealand, the courts' powers are limited to establishing the fact whether or not somebody has unlawfully carried out an abortion. The pronouncement of the sentence is then up to a government-instituted triumvirate whose sole function is to supervise the application of this law.

Surprisingly, an abortion can still be obtained in New Zealand if the continuance of the pregnancy would result in serious danger to the life of the woman, if the pregnancy is the result of incestual sexual intercourse, or if the woman is severely subnormal. Being too young or too old, and rape, are matters that "may be taken into account" but do not of themselves form grounds for abortion.

Not a single woman MP voted for this law, of course.

Role of Catholic Church.

How was it possible for this frightful nonsense to become law? One cannot but look at the role of the churches—and specifically the Catholic Church in New Zealand—for an answer.

The "Catholic vote" has traditionally been one of the mainstays of the labor movement in New Zealand, owing to a vocal working class element of (Catholic) Scottish and Irish descent. At the same time, the marriage of the retrogressive Catholicism with the progressive labor movement has always been somewhat suicidal—never more clearly so than during the elections of November 1975.

In the weeks preceding the election, the Prime Minister, Robert ("Piggy") Muldoon, then leader of the opposition, approached various heads of the Catholic and other churches, and assured them that

they could expect "more satisfactory results in the abortion question" from his party. In return, he expected and got the backing from the churches. There are many churchgoers who remember that during those weeks they were urged to vote for Muldoon's National party because of its more favorable stand on the abortion issue.

Whether this open trade-off was accompanied by contributions from the churches to the party's election coffers cannot be ascertained, as neither the churches nor the parties need to open their books to public scrutiny.

Even more important than the role of the churches in bringing about this law has been the rule of the Catholic-dominated Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC) that has been spooking about in New Zealand's political arena since 1970.

As far back as 1974 this organization was beginning to get a hold over a sizeable proportion of New Zealand's 87-strong parliament—17 MPs, four cabinet members and the speaker of the house were SPUC members.

Also in 1974, Ruth Kirk, wife of the late Prime Minister Norman Kirk, agreed to become SPUC's patron—only a few months after she had publicly declared on a radio talkback show that abortion was a woman's right.

Doctor's opposed to law.

Prime Minister Muldoon has been busy minimizing his own role in bringing about the passing of the new law.

Not only did Muldoon display an almost unsurpassable cynicism and a bad case of misogyny during the entire debate on the law; it was he who juggled

order papers, smoke-veiled rather than clarified points of the law, and herded MPs through long, gruelling night sessions without adequate time for reflection and pause, until the bill was law. At one point the MPs even decided—in error—to retain a controversial panel system they had just agreed to reject. It was symptomatic of the confusion in parliament, as Labour's Number Two, Bob Tizard, noted at the time, calling the entire exercise a "stunt."

The law itself provides an illustration of the central role SPUC played in drawing up this legislation. Thus the function of the act is stated to be "to provide for the circumstances and procedures under which abortions may be authorized after having full regard to the rights of the unborn child." Abortion is now "a medical or surgical procedure carried out or to be carried out for the purpose of procuring (a) the destruction or death of an embryo..." and so on.

Under the obstacle course charted out under the new law, a woman now has to first seek an abortion from her own doctor. The doctor then refers the case to two certifying consultants—at least one of whom must be a qualified obstetrician or gynecologist. These consultants are appointed by a supervisory committee set up by parliament.

To date, few doctors have volunteered to become certifying consultants, and in many areas of New Zealand there are, in fact, none.

The consultants themselves do not carry out the abortion but merely "okay" a case, passing it on to another doctor for servicing. As the executive abortionist in this case is reduced to a mere "technician," doctors feel unhappy about the establishment of an order between them.

A survey of 800 doctors in the Auckland region revealed that 80 to 85 percent wanted the new law dropped.

The head of the three-pronged supervisory committee, Mrs. Georgina Wallace, SM, has indicated she'd like to send the law back to parliament, but Muldoon has already indicated that in his opinion this would founder on technicalities, such as finding a majority for such a move in the government caucus, without which no government bill gets into the house.

On the other hand, he disclaims his government's responsibility for the bill, saying members of both parties voted on the bill individually.

Tom Appleton is a free-lance journalist in Wellington, New Zealand.

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Sweden

Continued from page 7.

Democrats. People don't automatically recognize that such complicated and radical plans are both in their interest and technically feasible.

By the 1976 election, LO had only begun to mobilize its people and the Social Democratic party had done nothing.

After the 1976 election, it seemed possible that the Social Democratic leadership might act cautiously and attempt to bury the issue. The events of the past year and a half proved otherwise. In 1977, LO began a campaign to broaden consciousness of the degree of wealth concentration in Sweden and translate it into support for wage earner funds. Local meetings were organized and every member was given a booklet containing educational material on the subject.

The Social Democratic party finally committed itself formally to support the wage earner fund concept in February of

this year when a joint LO-Social Democratic work group produced a revised version of the LO proposal. The new proposal modifies the old one on several points.

The formal ownership will now lie with the wage earners as a collectivity rather than with the trade unions. The voting rights of the collectively-owned shares will be exercised by the local trade union and regionally elected representatives of wage earners. Only companies with more than 500 employees would be covered by this fund. The proposal also states that a number of development funds financed by a 3 percent tax on the wage bill and controlled by the local trade union and public representatives should be set up to provide credit sources for new investment. In an obvious effort to soften the blow of these changes in the ownership structure, the work group suggests that the system be reevaluated every five years.

TCO is the key to the success or failure of the proposal for collective ownership. The TCO leadership appeared to support the plan but recognizes the necessity of getting broad membership support before supporting it publicly. To this end, TCO began an educational campaign in fall 1977.

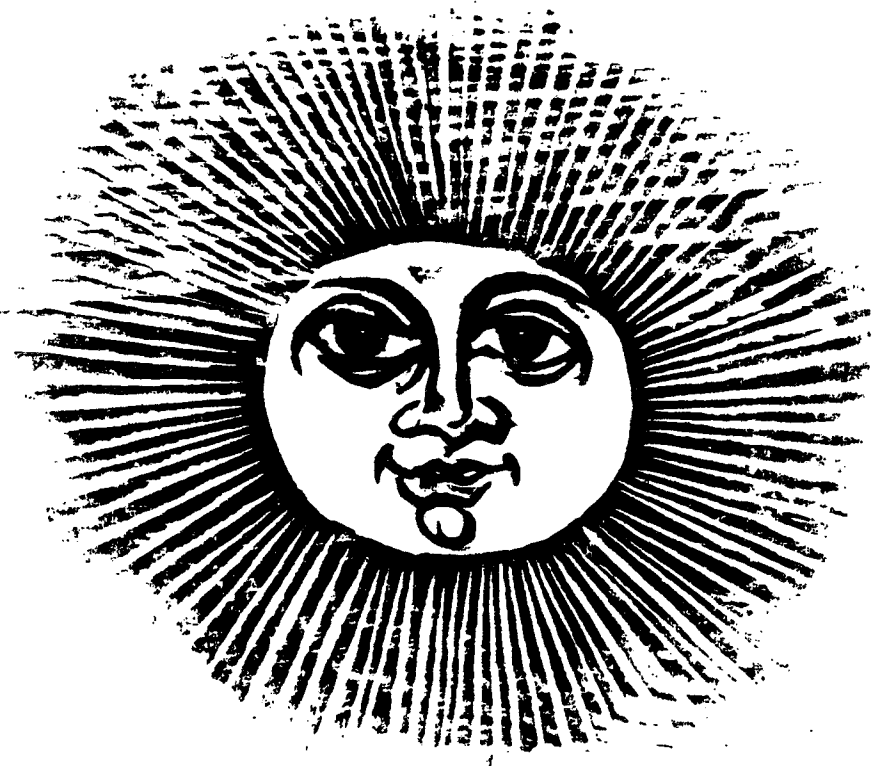
Obviously, the passage of any proposal for collective ownership depends also on the Social Democrats returning to power. The March polls give the socialist block an 8 percent lead over the governing bourgeois parties. Unless the government is able to turn the economy around a victory for the Social Democrats seems probable.

John Stephens is professor of sociology at Brown University and author of a forthcoming study of the Swedish Social Democrats.



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WHO'LL OWN THE SUN?

BY DAVID MOBERG

As I wandered through the "Solar-con" exposition of solar technologies in San Francisco last year, I noticed a large, detailed cutaway design of a house that the exhibitor was enthusiastically discussing with a clump of people. It was a remarkable solar dreamhouse, well within the range of current technologies.

Solar cells to generate electricity were arrayed on the roof along with collectors for heating and hot water. There were several types of wind turbines and windmills built into the house. A large incorporated greenhouse not only provided food but also collected heat during the day and generated oxygen for the house and for a tank where fish were raised. There were elaborate designs for recycling wastes, cleaning water for reuse, producing compost and filtering the air.

As I listened to the designer grow ecstatic about his self-reliant marvel, I was bothered by something in the plan. The house had a formidable security and surveillance system. The siege apparatus was an intimate part of his vision. He anticipated that his dream house would be built in a very limited edition for the few extremely wealthy men who saw—as he did—that civilization was about to collapse. They could escape to their totally self-sufficient homes, pull up the drawbridge and watch the teeming masses suffer their Last Judgment. I walked away with a bit more skepticism about the inherently liberating powers of solar, decentralist technology.

A few months later I was visiting an aging building in a fairly poor black neighborhood on Chicago's near southwest side. Upstairs a group of community people and organizer/activists from other parts of the city were pursuing a crash course in the principles of trapping the

sun's energy, learning what cheap materials could do the job well and how they could make the equipment themselves with simple tools.

They took a break from the class to retreat to different corners of the building where they were constructing solar heating panels and building a sun-heated greenhouse into the top floor and roof of the structure, which was owned by a community social action group.

The greenhouse would provide jobs for a few unemployed residents of the area and would soon be producing healthy, tasty vegetables at lower than supermarket prices. Not only would the operation improve the health and living standards of the neighborhood but also its modest profits would be used to build more greenhouses and solar facilities throughout the area. That would stimulate local self-reliance and economic activity while reducing the ripoff of the neighborhood's scanty resources by chain stores, utilities and other big businesses. In a small way the project would gain community control of some means of production.

Time for tough questions.

Two examples of solar and "soft" technology, two quite different views of a solar society. Now with Sun Day upon us and solar energy joining the ranks of motherhood and cherry pie as a good thing, some of the tougher questions about solar energy need to be pressed if its potential is ever to be realized.

Although the Carter administration has failed to acknowledge its importance—as indicated by a proposed cut in spending for solar energy in the coming fiscal year—solar energy is increasingly recognized as a viable alternative in the near future and the only long-range hope for safe, sane energy. "Solar" refers, in this common shorthand expression, not only to

direct use of the sun's rays for moderate heating, photovoltaic electricity production or concentrated high heat, but also to wind power, tidal power, ocean temperature differentials, accumulated energy in plants ("biomass"), the flow of rivers and streams and all other sources renewed by the daily rays of the sun.

Vast expansion of solar energy will not only guarantee a stable energy supply but also make it possible to extend for many centuries the limited world stocks of fossil fuels and make dependence on dangerous, unreliable nuclear power as unnecessary as it is undesirable.

Two studies published in April forecast an immense solar potential over the next 20 to 50 years. The Council on Environmental Quality of the Executive Office of the President estimated that solar energy can provide one-fourth of the nation's needs by the year 2000 and "significantly more than half" by 2020. Assuming the maximum development of solar potential in their scenario and vigorous conservation and "leak-plugging" efforts to restrain growth in energy demand, the sun could yield three-eighths of U.S. energy needs by 2000 and nearly all by 2020.

Denis Hayes, initiator of Sun Day and author of *Rays of Hope*, projected in a Worldwatch Institute "Solar Energy Timetable" that world reliance on solar energy could quadruple between now and 1995. By 2025, he claims, solar heat, renewable electric from sun, wind and water, and biomass fuels could meet five-sixths of the world needs.

These goals can largely be achieved with existing technology as it is improved and mass produced much more cheaply. The question is not whether solar energy is practicable, but how do we make the transition and how fast.

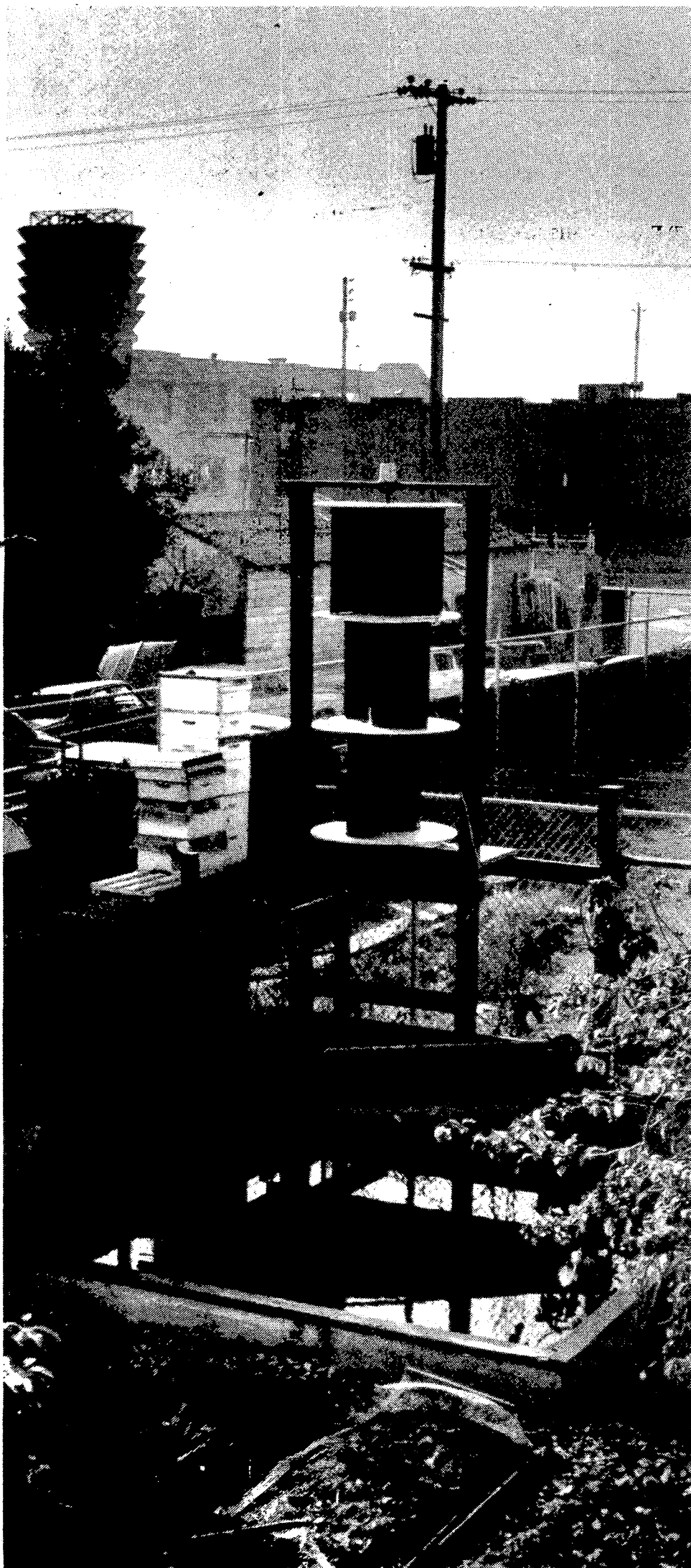
Solar proponents are right in arguing that we are at a significant turning point



THE SOLAR AGE COMETH

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PHOTOS IN THIS SECTION ARE OF THE INTEGRAL URBAN HOUSE, AN EXPERIMENT IN ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGY LOCATED IN BERKELEY, CALIF. PHOTOGRAPHER: PAT GOUDVIS.



Savonius Rotor windmill made from scrap material circulates water in pond. Note beehives and raised bed in garden.

not only in our technology but also in our possibilities for reshaping society. Unfortunately those who don't completely ignore the social issues in favor of technological fantasies about woodburning stoves and photovoltaic-powered microcomputers often have at best a naively apolitical view of social change and a misunderstanding of the relationship of capitalism to the energy issues.

Liberal decentralist image.

Although the visions of a solar society range from our apocalyptic right-wing anarchist's retreat to community control of greenhouses or from a "Jeffersonian" small-scale capitalism to corporate launching of giant space satellites with solar cell collectors that beam microwaves back to earth, there is a common liberal, decentralist, small-scale image of the solar society. Many advocates assume that adopting solar technology will almost automatically lead to a decline in central authorities, a redistribution of income and power, the emergence of a simple, ecologically-minded lifestyle, the strengthening of autonomy and self-reliance and full employment.

The Sun Day brochure is typical: "...the solar age will...be a time of simpler technology and greater institutional decentralization. Since a solar collector can't melt down like a nuclear power plant, it doesn't need expensive emergency safety systems. Since a windmill doesn't ruin the land like a strip mine, we don't need a vast federal bureaucracy to assure compliance with a complex set of regulations. Since individual farms, homes and communities will be producing their own power, there will be less reliance on central electrical generating plants and on giant power lines. Since solar energy is everywhere, we won't be dependent upon large energy companies which could manipulate prices or even cut off supplies. To us, the solar age means self-reliance, simplicity and local control.

"Moreover, the solar age will be one of full employment.... Furthermore, since solar will decrease our balance of trade deficit, more money will be available here at home for job and social programs. Finally, ...energy will be valued, not wasted, and resources will be reused and recycled, not thrown out."

All that is possible—but it will take political mobilization and new social forms as well as solar technology. There's the rub. True to Yankee mechanic traditions, many solar technology enthusiasts find it easier to talk about oil, manure and machinery than about capital, labor, profit and power.

Many solar activists blame big machines and fossil or nuclear fuels for evils that actually stem from concentrations of economic power in our society.

Capitalist concentration.

Capitalism tends by its own process of accumulating wealth toward centralized might, which in turn selects and shapes technology that suits the needs of the powerful. Many of the ills of the U.S. that solar advocates lament are as much the result of capitalism as of centralized, "high" technology. At the same time the old socialist bromide that happiness will come when existing technique is submitted to state or public control is also inadequate. Both solar energy and socialist institutions are needed.

Brian Martin, writing in the British radical technology journal, *Undercurrents*, argues that conservation, solar energy for heating and reduced energy for transport (including public transport) are alternatives that do not really challenge existing political and economic inequality or private control of production. Collective production of goods and services and less production of military equipment and luxuries for the rich, on the other hand, could disrupt existing institutions, he argues. Rather than willy-nilly push for solar technology under any economic conditions, Martin writes, organizations should "demonstrate the *possibility* of alternatives and the *impossibility* of attaining them within societal structures as they exist."

Decentralization vs. concentration.

What then can we make of the potential for reconstructing society through adoption of solar technology?

Solar advocates promise that solar energy will create a decentralized society. Although decentralization can facilitate direct, democratic control, that is by no

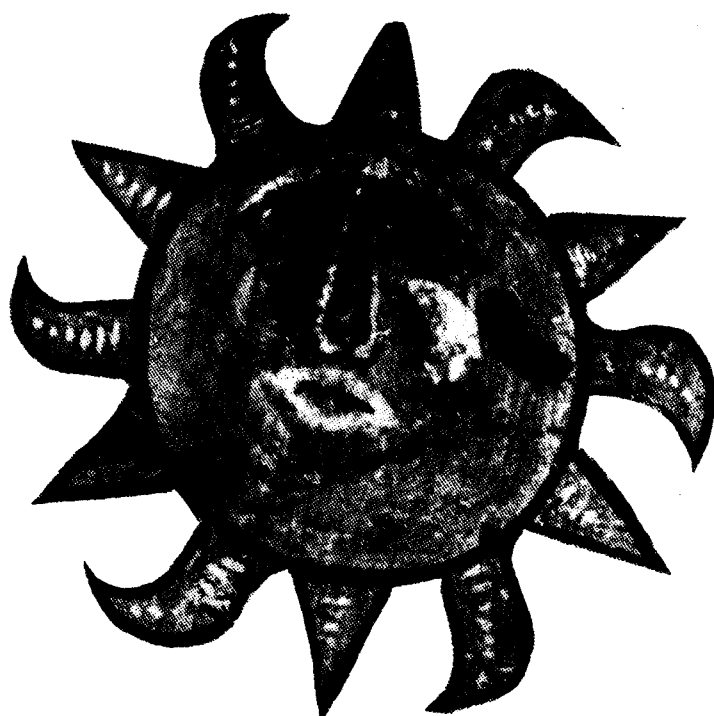
FURTHER INFORMATION ON SOLAR AND OTHER ENERGY SOURCES

POVERTY OF POWER BY BARRY COM-MONER (New York: Bantam Books; 1977) and **ENERGY FOR SURVIVAL**, BY Wilson Clark (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday; 1976). These texts provide a general overview of the role of present and future energy sources in our economic and production systems, with emphasis on the solar alternative.

SOFT ENERGY PATHS: TOWARD A DUR-able PEACE BY AMORY B. LOVINS (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger Publishing Company; 1977) and **WAYS OF HOPE: THE TRANSITION TO A POST PETROLEUM WORLD**, BY DENNIS HAYES (New York: W.W. Norton Company; 1977). Liberal technological analyses of the potential for Solar Energy Development on a world-wide basis. These treatises are strong on the physical aspects of solar development but are lacking in economic and political analysis of the obstacles to a solar transition.

THE SOLAR HOME BOOK: HEATING, COOLING AND DESIGNING WITH THE SUN, BY BRUCE ANDERSON (Harrisville, N.H.: Cheshire Books; 1976), **DESIGNING AND BUILDING A SOLAR HOUSE: YOUR PLACE IN THE SUN**, BY DONALD WATSON (Charlotte, Vt.: Garden Way Publishing Company; 1977) and **PRODUCING YOUR OWN POWER**, EDITED BY CAROL STONER (Emmaus, Pa.: Rodale Press; 1976). These texts provide lay discussions of "how-to" questions of solar technology, with emphasis on solar collectors for the home.

NATIONAL SOLAR HEATING AND COOLING INFORMATION CENTER, Box 1607, Rockville, MD 20850, toll free phone number: (800) 523-2929. This is a project of the federal government which can provide consumers with information on how to use and purchase solar equipment.



A SOLAR ENERGY PACKAGE

BY MARLA B. KORCHMAR

The Solar Coalition, a Washington-based group of congressional staff and environmentalists, has assembled a comprehensive package of solar energy legislation. The package was introduced in the House March 13.

The package includes 13 measures:

1) **THE SOLAR ENERGY TRANSITION ACT**—a bill requiring the gradual conversion of some federally-owned structures to solar power.

2) **THE SOLAR ENERGY BANK ACT**—authorizing low-interest, long-term loans to individuals for the purchase of solar equipment.

3) **THE SUN DAY RESOLUTION**—Proclaiming May 3, 1978, Sun Day.

4) **SMALL SCALE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS REORGANIZATION ACT**—a bill establishing an Office of Small Scale Technology within the Department of Energy (DOE).

5) **WORLD ENERGY CONFERENCE RESOLUTION**—calling for the establishment of an International Alternate Energy Commission funded by the UN.

6) **SOLAR GLOBAL MARKETING SURVEY**—a measure authorizing Secretaries of Commerce and Energy to conduct a survey determining which countries may be recipients of solar energy equipment made in the U.S.

7) **FOREIGN MISSION SOLAR ENERGY DEMONSTRATION ACT**—appropriating \$5 million for the demonstration of solar technologies in foreign American-owned diplomatic buildings. The bill aims to stimulate U.S. export markets.

8) **LETTER URGING FUNDING FOR AGRICULTURAL SOLAR ENERGY RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND DEMONSTRATION ACT**—the bill was passed by both houses last year, but the money was never appropriated.

9) **AMENDMENTS TO DOE FY 1979 BUDGET**—over \$150 million to increase DOE spending on photovoltaics (by \$55.4 million), wind power (by \$80 million), desalination (by \$4 million) and passive solar energy (by \$12 million).

10) **ESTABLISHMENT OF A BILATERAL PROGRAM IN RENEWABLE ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES WITH UNDER-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES**—authorizing \$20 million to

support the Agency for International Development's international energy programs.

11) **SOLAR AND CONSERVATION LOAN PROGRAM WITHIN THE SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**—a bill allowing the SBA to make loans to businesses for the purchase of solar energy equipment.

12) **AMENDMENT TO THE SMALL BUSINESS ACT**—a bill to provide loans to companies manufacturing solar energy or energy-conservation equipment.

13) **HART OFFICE BUILDING STUDY**—to determine the feasibility of installing solar panels on the roof of the new Philip Hart Senate Office building currently under construction.

The Solar Coalition does not endorse all solar legislation introduced in Congress. One bill introduced this session, Rep. Ronnie Flippo's (D-AL) Solar Satellite Bill, for instance, is not concerned with small-scale technology.

Consumer Action Now, a solar lobby group is coordinating Coalition activities. *This article originally appeared in Critical Mass Journal, 133 C St., SW, Washington, DC 20003.*

means an automatic result. Complete decentralization into small units, such as a home, may also not be an efficient nor socially beneficial energy strategy. Community-scale windmills, biogas plants, small hydroelectric generators and other solar technology may be preferable. For example, the Council on Environmental Quality report, "Solar Energy: Progress and Promise," concluded that "the most promising future belongs to integrated or 'total energy' systems, in which intermediate temperature technologies are used to produce electricity and heat on a factory or community scale."

Solar backers have been concerned that corporate—and especially utility—influence in the government and big business research programs will skew solar power toward centralized techniques—such as space satellites, sun-concentrating "power towers," or giant windmills. But even if they succeed in diverting the new energy technologies toward smaller scale, simpler equipment, they have not thoroughly reckoned with the centralized power of banks and other financial institutions. Besides having a deeply vested interest in the profitability of existing energy companies, the banks will undoubtedly continue to prefer financing large-scale projects through established corporations rather than loaning money to individuals, coops, community development corporations or other decentralized entrepreneurs.

Although many utilities are bucking solar power, they may find some salvation from solar advocates such as Amory Lovins. Lovins argues that the utilities can make more money loaning cash to people for solar home projects. But the much-touted decentralist proponent of "soft energy paths" would leave the utilities with plenty of hard cash nicely centralized in their accounts, hardly a step toward redistribution of wealth.

Lovins, in his "neo-capitalist" scenario, predicts that the utilities will even lower their rates as solar technology expands. But current trends suggest that the utilities may cause serious problems with "back-up systems," which will be needed in most parts of the country, especially in older buildings that are converted.

Just last week Peoples Gas in northern Illinois argued for a \$60.8 million rate hike on the grounds that conservation measures had cut sales seven percent over the past five years. As people buy less gas or electricity, utilities will most likely charge more in order to maintain their profits. Elsewhere utilities are trying to penalize customers with their own generators or trying to control solar devices and charge by metered rates for the sun.

Such actions will not only retard solar power but also penalize the poor. They already pay disproportionately more of their income for energy and have less to spend on conservation or on solar equipment.

Who'll own the sun?

The marketing and financial power of big corporations, which has contributed to their growth often more than efficiency, will continue to undermine decentralism. If anyone thought that a future decline in oil production would reduce the heads of Exxon to panhandling for spare change,

they forget that, as John Swearingen of Standard of Indiana said recently, "We're not in the energy business. We're in the business of trying to use the assets entrusted to us by our shareholders to give them the best return on money they've invested in the company."

Standard and other oil companies have been diversifying rapidly, buying everything from retail chains and newspapers to chemical companies and mining operations. All but two of the U.S. photovoltaic cell producers have now been bought by large corporations. Oil companies have acquired large assets of copper, a crucial raw material for many solar applications. (Atlantic Richfield, for example, recently purchased Anaconda.)

Big corporations—including today's oil companies—are thus in a position to control much of the components and production of future solar technologies. Tom Bender, writing in the January *RAIN* magazine, wrote that big business now loves alternative technology. The small innovators are finding what works, and the big corporations will soon take over for the mass market.

Likewise, zoning regulations, performance criteria and other standards can be—and often are—written to work against the individual or community group in favor of large manufacturers or real estate developers.

Even if solar power gives a homeowner access to "free" sun (after paying the bank interest and buying the equipment from an Exxon subsidiary) the power of the large, centralized corporations will continue unabated if something is not done directly to curtail it or transform the ownership and control of the corporations.

It would be a great step forward to develop the solar technologies, but they are

not likely by themselves to usher in the golden era of autonomy and decentralized control.

Redistribution not automatic.

Neither are they likely by themselves to bring about the redistribution of power or wealth that many advocates predict. Privately some solar proponents fear that a new inequality could result from the unfettered action of the market. Middle-class individuals and more affluent blue-collar workers may be able to obtain loans or save enough money to install solar equipment, but most workers—and certainly the very poor—will be shut out. If electricity and gas prices climb upwards, especially in response to utility pleas that they are not making their guaranteed profits, those without solar equipment will suffer most.

Likewise the third of American households who rent—disproportionately lower income—are likely to be left out of the solar boom unless their buildings are converted to self-managed cooperatives or owner-occupied homes. Since landlords can pass on their fuel costs to home or apartment renters, there is little incentive for them to install new solar equipment. Homeowner taxbreaks for solar equipment will not help renters either.

Solar energy alone, then, is unlikely to redistribute wealth significantly. Actually, redistribution of income will have to come first if the solar potential has a chance to be realized.

Numerous studies now show that solar technologies will probably provide many more jobs to yield the same energy yield as nuclear plants, coal-fired generators, coal liquefaction or gasification and other capital-intensive alternatives (*JTT*, Feb. 15). A booming solar industry could consequently provide the basis for a new technological leap forward and help to re-

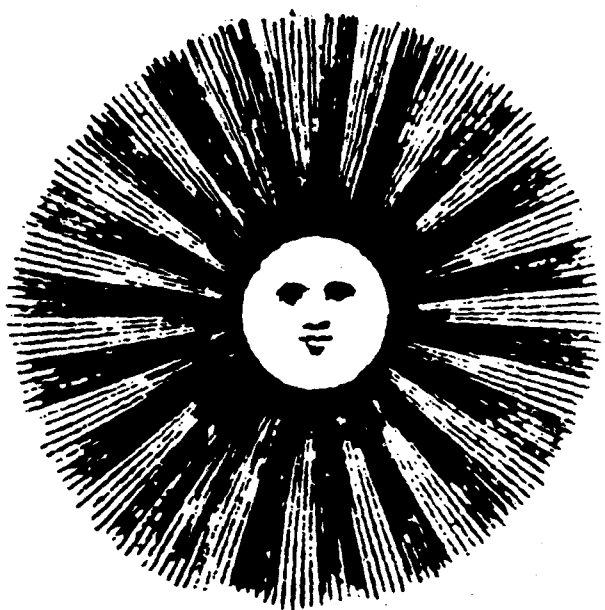
verse the stagnation of the American economy.

However, solar energy production will not eliminate the unemployment from business cycles nor the systematic creation of a reserve of unemployed workers. In any case, defending a technology simply as labor intensive is short-sighted. Ultimately, our aim should not be just employment, but meaningful, useful, satisfying work that yields goods and services that people really need. (That could mean less work overall but evenly divided.)

Many solar strategies can provide fairly satisfying work, but they could also yield simply more assembly lines. It is important in the transition to the sun economy to re-evaluate all goods that are produced and the means of producing them, not simply to produce more wage labor, whatever its uses or satisfactions.

People can confront the "energy crisis" as a problem of where to get more and cheaper energy or they can go farther and ask what the energy is used for and who decides. The more politically sensitive solar advocates have a vision of radical decentralism that will guarantee individual autonomy and extremely small-scale operations. Without directly confronting capitalist wealth and power, however, their dream will be stymied. Their revulsion at bureaucracy and authoritarian centralism in capitalist and socialist states seems to limit their hope for broad cooperation. By avoiding the socialist alternative, they see no way of making democratic decisions over the inevitable large-scale issues—such as what do we do with the vast hoards of energy company wealth?

A democratic, socialist America would have to run on solar power. But a solar America that is not socialist has little chance of living the social vision that inspires the promoters of power from the sun.



SOLAR TECHNOLOGY

BY JIM KENDELL, DAVID KRIEBEL
AND ROBERT SCOTT

Everyone seems to be celebrating the potential of solar power these days; it would seem that the "Solar Age" is almost upon us. But unfortunately, not everyone is talking about the same thing.

Solar technology ranges from the simple—a black metal plate with a glass cover—to the complex—space satellites with millions of solar cells and expensive microwave sending and receiving equipment. Each technology entails specific economic, social and political consequences. They are not all equal.

ELECTRIC POWER

About 28 percent of the energy consumed in the U.S. is in the form of electricity. It is used primarily for running electric motors (50 percent), heating and cooling (45 percent) and lighting (5 percent).

Electricity is a "high quality" form of energy because it can be converted into mechanical energy (with electric motors) at nearly 100 percent efficiency, can achieve high temperatures and can be easily converted into work in precisely the quantity desired (envision running your blender with a gasoline engine).

Electricity is also expensive. While the conversion of electricity into mechanical energy is quite efficient, the production and distribution of electricity are quite inefficient. Only about one-third of the heat energy that begins at the central power plant in the form of oil, gas and coal or uranium ends up as electricity in the home or factory.

Because electric power generation delivers high quality energy—but at a price—it must be carefully matched to its end uses. In the solar future, for instance, electricity will not heat homes, where only moderate temperatures, attainable with solar collectors, are needed.

Several solar technologies could also provide electricity needed for lighting and electric motors. Here are major candidates:

- Photovoltaic cells are sophisticated, no-moving-parts devices closely related to transistors. They convert solar rays directly into electricity. Photovoltaics are currently made only in small quantities, and are quite expensive.

The current status of photovoltaics is often compared with that of transistors in the early 1950s, when they cost \$40 each. Large-scale automation and exploding demand rapidly dropped that price until today hundreds of transistors and other components are packed into one silicon "chip" to run the common \$8 calculator. (ITT, Feb. 15.)

Each photovoltaic cell produces a small amount of power. To produce a large amount, many cells are hooked together. A giant, centralized photovoltaic power station has no particular advantage. Each neighborhood or household could install the number of cells it needed to meet its own demand.

- Windmills can provide electricity too. Roughly as much energy is available in the winds that blow across the land as in the sunlight that falls on it. Windmills are environmentally benign, although they may interfere with TV reception.

While the government keeps the aerospace engineers happy building test windmills with 60 foot blades designed to rival nuclear plants in complexity, the future of wind power may well lie in small windmills that can be tied together and used in conjunction with photovoltaics to produce a more constant supply of power (cloudy days tend also to be windy ones).

- Photovoltaic cells placed in outer space would be very efficient because of the perpetual sunshine. Satellite power stations (SSPS) are a favorite of Energy Secretary James Schlesinger and, needless to say, the aerospace industry. The plan is to

put a satellite in stationary orbit over the U.S. and then beam down energy with microwaves.

The SSPS is the ultimate central power station. It would require the space shuttle for installation and maintenance and would have to be very large to be economically feasible.

- Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC) is another electric technology that is yet to be fully developed. OTEC uses the small temperature difference between the warm ocean surface and cold depths to drive a heat engine that powers an electric generator. This technology has been tested on a small scale, but some technical roadblocks remain in its commercialization.

Like the SSPS, OTEC is unsuitable for neighborhood installations. It might, however, be an option for coastal cities.

- If sunlight is concentrated, it can boil water to run a conventional steam turbine and electric generator. This idea is being tested in several "power towers." A field of concentrating mirrors, which follow the sun, focus its rays on a boiler at the top of a tower in the middle of the field. The federal government is supporting construction of such a station in Barstow, Calif., to produce ten megawatts of electricity.

Not only are SSPS, OTEC and the power tower undeveloped technologies, but their large scale requires long-distance transmission—an expensive (close to one-half of the cost of electricity would be for distribution) and capital intensive process.

Photovoltaics and wind, on the other hand, are well suited for installation at the point of demand—a neighborhood or household.

TRANSPORTATION

Slightly more than one-quarter of the energy consumed in the U.S. in 1976 was used for transportation. Some 58 percent of this was used in private autos, 24 percent in trucks, 12 percent in aircraft and the remainder was used in the bus, rail and marine sectors.

Almost all transportation fuel comes from petroleum. This sector consumes more than one-half the oil used in the U.S., including large amounts of imported oil. If imports are to be reduced, petroleum use for transportation must be cut back. Solar energy can contribute to this reduction in several ways.

Liquid and gaseous fuels are vital for all forms of transportation, because vehicles can then be used without a direct connection to a fixed energy source. Solar energy, stored in plant matter, could be a major potential source of liquid and gas fuels. This energy source is generally referred to as biomass. It is available in organic garbage, animal manures, agricultural crop wastes, forestry residues, crops grown specifically for energy production on the land (wood and grain) and in water (plants and algae).

The potential for harvesting energy from biomass is huge. A recent study of the energy available in garbage, manure and agricultural wastes alone estimated that total production could reach ten quadrillion BTUs (quads) per year, or about half of the total transportation fuel demand.

Biomass can be converted into alcohol or methane, using old and well-developed technologies of fermentation. Brazil now gets about 6 percent of its liquid fuel from biomass-alcohol. The primary barriers to U.S. development are lack of experience with fermentation technology for energy production and a shortage of investment capital.

Hydrogen gas may be another potential source of fuel for transportation. Small amounts of hydrogen are now used in industry, but costs are too high to justify its use as a fuel.

Hydrogen can be made by electrolytically splitting water into hydrogen and oxygen gas. It can also be made by heating water,

OUR CHOICE WILL DETERMINE THE FUTURE

under proper conditions with a chemical catalyst. Neither of these approaches is developed enough for use in the near future. However, with rapid development of photovoltaics and solar thermal technology, hydrogen could become a significant fuel source for transportation.

Electricity can be used for transportation either through batteries in cars and trucks or through electrified railroads and trolleys. Both exist on a small scale, but barriers exist to their widespread application. Batteries are heavy, and do not hold enough energy for long trips; they must be recharged frequently. Electric railroads, trolleys and subways seem best suited for urban areas where heavy use can offset the disadvantage of their high capital cost.

Important economic differences exist between biomass and electricity for transportation. The collection and conversion of biomass would be more labor-intensive and more decentralized. Biomass could also be an important new crop for farmers who now suffer from low crop prices in part because of a surplus of grain. This has already led to renewed interest in "gas-ohol" (a gasoline-alcohol mixture used in place of gasoline). Compared with an alcohol-based transportation system, electrical transportation systems would probably require significantly more capital for development. Too little is known about hydrogen production technology to specify its economic characteristics. However, it more closely resembles electricity production than biomass in labor and capital requirements.

HEATING AND COOLING

Heat and cooling systems for homes, offices and industry consume about 40 percent of the energy used in the U.S., larger than any other single use. In addition to residential space heating and cooling, a large and relatively homogeneous requirement, this category includes heat for many industrial processes, including steam for industrial uses, metal refining and washing refillable bottles. Industrial processes consume 28 percent of total heat energy, while space heat uses 45 percent and air conditioning and water heating require about 25 percent. Many other tasks such as cooking use small amounts of heat.

It is technically feasible to provide all the energy needed for space heating and air conditioning with solar direct heat. However, it may be economically more efficient to provide only about 70 percent of this heat from direct solar collection, and to maintain back up systems for the remainder. The solar technologies for meeting this need are available today.

To be most efficient it is best to design solar collection systems for use on new homes. Fuel savings may not justify the expense of retro-fitting old homes. Thus a transition to a solar system will have to proceed slowly, with the sun providing perhaps one-quarter of total heating needs by 2000 and three-quarters by 2025.

Solar collectors for industrial process heat are also available today at prices that are rapidly making them attractive to industry.

Industrial processes usually require heat at temperatures above the boiling point of water and therefore must use a type of collector different from that used at home. Industrial systems use mirrors to concentrate sunlight on a collector tube, which produces the temperatures required. Development of the concentrating collector is progressing rapidly, with at least ten varieties of equipment now being made in the U.S.

PRINCIPLES FOR A SOLAR TRANSITION

Both technical and political problems will have to be confronted in the phase-out



A greenhouse at the Integral Urban House. In the background are beehives.

of conventional energy sources and the phase-in of solar sources. What is needed is the step-by-step blending of new energy-producing and energy using technologies, with existing technologies that are to be replaced.

Two basic principles ought to guide this transition:

First, the price of energy from all sources ought to be stabilized as soon as possible at as low a level as possible.

Raising the price of energy quickly would make some solar equipment competitive more quickly, but it would do so at enormous cost to poor and working people. Poor families already spend almost one-fourth of their income on energy. Doubling the price of energy could well force the poor to either give up eating or living in houses.

To keep prices of energy low some public funds must be spent to advance commercialization of certain solar technologies (such as photovoltaic cells), but the total cost of such programs would be far less than that of raising the price of all energy forms.

Second, investments in transitional fossil fuels should focus on those that use relatively little capital.

Solar technologies are capital-intensive, and even though they will produce many more jobs per dollar invested than conventional capital-intensive technologies, the installation of solar devices still requires large investments. Supporting fossil fuel systems should be low in capital intensity to avoid competing with solar investments for scarce funds.

The goal of the transition should be to replace the existing energy infrastructure of the U.S. with a solar based one. Making large investments in energy systems that must then be discarded when solar sources are developed would be a gross misuse of social resources.

Some of the implications of these principles are:

- The price of all oil and gas should continue to be regulated.
- In general, expansion of central electric power generating systems, both coal and nuclear powered, should be avoided.
- Natural gas should become the most

important transitional fuel. It is available in large quantity, requires relatively little capital investment and can be produced at a low, stable price.

Recent discoveries of gas in the Gulf of Mexico indicate that "geopressurized natural gas" is present three to five miles below the surface in vast quantities. Dr. Myron Dorfman, a Department of Energy consultant, has estimated that between 3,000 and 49,000 quads can be recovered from this source. By comparison, present U.S. gas consumption is 20 quads a year, and total consumption of all fuels is 75 quads. A test geopressurized well was recently drilled off the Florida coast and is now the largest single gas producing well ever drilled. Geopressurized gas can be produced economically.

Gas is also an ideal back-up fuel for solar heating systems. A large number of homes are now heated with gas. If gas is used as a back-up for a solar system, conversion costs will be reduced. In addition, solar-methane made from biomass can replace pipeline natural gas without any conversion. Thus, in the long run it will be feasible to have back-up systems using solar methane.

Another crucial aspect of natural gas is that it is an ideal fuel for co-generation of heat and electricity in homes and neighborhoods. This can be done with small engines that are more efficient than furnaces or central power plants. Unlike coal or fuel oil, natural gas burns cleanly. The Fiat Co. is beginning production of this type of system, using a small Fiat auto engine. The unit can be installed in a home and can produce heat and electricity at a cost below that of existing utility systems. (It could also be a major source of new jobs for the auto industry.)

The U.S. is still a long way from an economy based on renewable energy sources. The nuclear program is past its prime, but far from dead. Carter and many liberals want to see increased reliance on coal—a dead end energy path because it can only be used in capital-intensive and highly centralized processes.

After years of malign neglect under Nixon and Ford solar energy has at least half-hearted support from the Carter ad-

ministration. They have little choice. Popular interest has grown tremendously (at one point 60 percent of the mail coming into the old Energy Research and Development Agency concerned solar power).

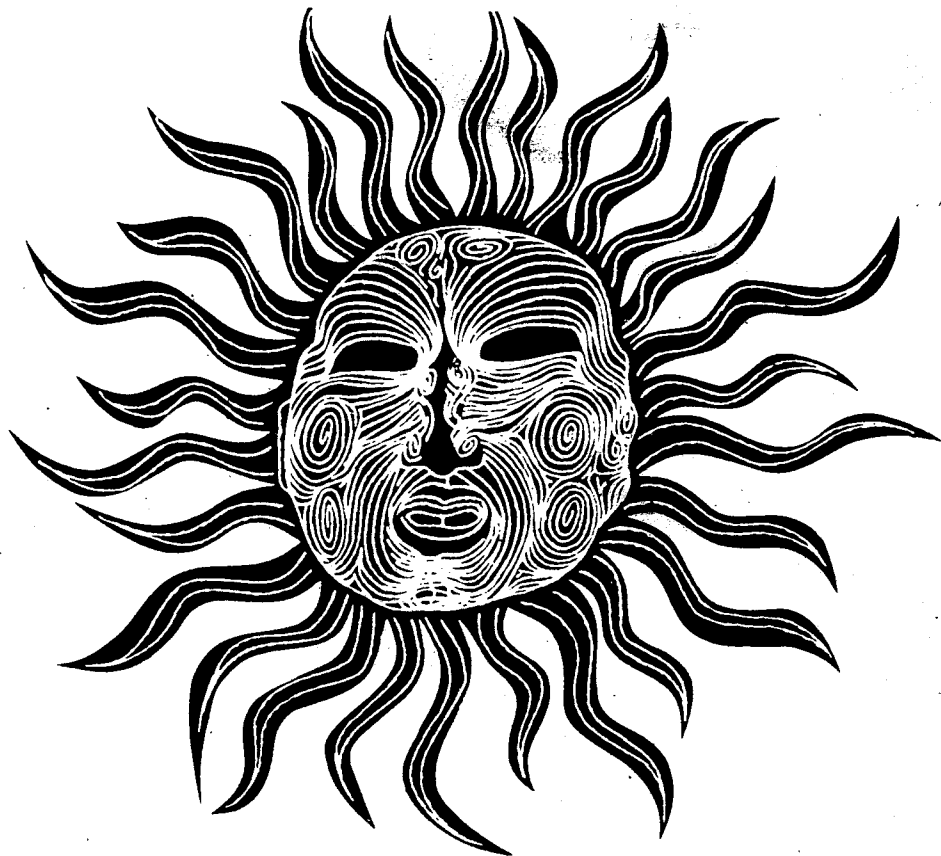
But it may be right to question whether the government isn't pursuing solar after the nuclear model? The government's solar strategy is one that emphasizes solar-powered alternatives to existing power plants—nuclear, coal-fired, etc., rather than alternatives to the entire energy economy. The government does not seem interested in changing the system of utility-owned central-power stations that characterizes the present energy sector.

Trends in the private sector also suggest that solar energy may end up simply "plugged in" to an unaltered energy ownership and distribution system. The energy giants—Exxon, Mobil, Atlantic Richfield and others—are into solar energy, as are other large corporations—Motorola, Hughes Aircraft, Grumman Aircraft, Westinghouse and General Electric. Only two significant photovoltaic manufacturers are not owned by large conglomerates.

Some solar devices are beginning to take on the complexity of reactor technology because nuclear engineers are relocating in OTEC, SSPS and other solar research projects. Utilities are interested in buying and owning solar collectors on their customers' homes, renting solar energy in regular monthly installments.

Solar energy can get us out of our expensive, polluting reliance on nonrenewable energy sources. Indeed, there are few alternatives in the long run. Solar energy can make possible a change to a more democratic energy economy, one that is decentralized and under everyone's control. But solar energy can also be co-opted by aggressive corporate and utility intervention. Which of these solar paths we take—and how soon we take one—will be decided, not by technology, but by political action.

Jim Kendell works for the Scientists' Institute for Public Information. David Kriebel and Robert Scott are research associates at the Center for the Biology of Natural Systems in St. Louis.



THE AMAZING POTENTIAL OF BIOMASS ENERGY

BY STEPHEN SCHNEIDER

The dramatic return of the wood-burning stove—from near oblivion a few years ago to the largest single source of alternative home heating in America today—has less to do with nostalgia than with common economic sense. With fossil fuel prices still rising, wood and an odd assortment of other organic materials—such as garbage, sugar cane, algae and even cat-tails—are catching the attention of a growing number of individuals, corporations and cities in search of cheap, renewable energy sources.

While some American cities are already burning refuse to generate energy (and roughly a hundred others are studying the process), other organic materials, commonly known as biomass fuels, offer even greater rewards. The energy content of wood and dry crop wastes is comparable to that of western coals, and are as easily burned or gasified as coal. But unlike coal, raw biomass contains virtually no sulfur and little ash, making it a far cleaner energy source.

A report by the prestigious Mitre Corporation recently concluded that about 5 percent of all American energy needs could be produced on just 10 percent of forest and pasture lands now lying idle. High-yield species could be grown in closely spaced, short-rotation tree farms.

In California a study by the state Energy Commission found that existing plant residues amount to over a quad of energy—nearly 20 percent of the state's total energy consumption. At least one-third of this "is economically and otherwise available (not currently used elsewhere)" for use as an energy source, according to Robert Hodam, manager of the fuels program at the California Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission.

Some biomass fuels competitive.

With natural gas selling for \$2.50 per million BTUs, some biomass fuels are already economically competitive. People's Gas in Chicago sells natural gas derived from biomass materials for \$1.80 per million BTUs. And Bio-Gas of Colorado, Inc., is conducting studies on a cattle manure-fueled power plant in Lamar, Col., which would provide electricity for 20,000 people at prices competitive with coal and natural gas.

In California the Energy Commission found that wood waste material is sold anywhere from minus \$5 a ton (you pay to have it hauled away) to \$27-30 a ton. Even at the higher price, the fuel plus conversion costs remain competitive or nearly competitive with conventional natural gas.

Another source of biomass energy is ocean kelp that can be converted to methane. According to some estimates, kelp could generate as much natural gas as the U.S. currently consumes—23 trillion cubic feet a year.

However, a recent study by Dynatech R&D Co. in Cambridge, Mass., indicates that preliminary designs for the kelp conversion systems are still short of commercial feasibility. This is expected to set back the plans of the American Gas Association and the General Electric Co., its prime contractor, on a program to develop an ocean-based kelp plantation for energy production.

One of the more unlikely—and most promising—sources of biomass energy is the common cattail that grows in peat bogs and wetlands. Botanists at the University of Minnesota claim that cattails produce half again as much biomass material per acre as corn, one of the most efficient biomass producers. The Minnesota Energy Agency recently reported that about 10 percent of the state's total energy requirement could be produced by cattails planted on just 25 percent of the state's wetlands.

Despite its long term potential, the biomass option has received little attention in the Carter energy plan. And in the current federal energy research and develop-

ment budget, only \$20.7 million is authorized for the biomass program, in sharp contrast to the \$323 million for coal-based synthetic fuels.

The designers of Carter's energy plan "were not totally aware of its potential," according to Roscoe F. Ward, the bureau chief of the federal biomass program. "But I think the president is changing his attitude towards it."

Carter is proposing a 29 percent increase in the biomass program for fiscal 1979—still less than a tenth of what is to be spent on the coal conversion program.

The most important item in the federal biomass program during the coming year will be five awards for wood energy plantations in different parts of the country, intended to demonstrate the commercial feasibility of the biomass option.

Other countries ahead.

Other countries have been doing much more with biomass fuels. In Sweden the forest industry produces 60 percent of its own energy needs. A study by the Forest Products Laboratory in Madison, Wisc. found that by using wastes alone the American forest industry could come close to being self-sufficient in energy by 1990. California sawmills have been using their own wood waste for steam for the past 30-40 years, according to Hodam. The larger ones generate their own electricity.

In Europe liquid fuels from biomass materials have been blended with gasoline for decades. And in Brazil, which has the world's most ambitious biomass program, it is now national policy to substitute up to 20 percent ethyl alcohol for liquid fuels. The ethyl alcohol (ethanol) produced mainly from sugarcane is superior to gasoline as a motor fuel, delivering as much power per liter with far less pollution.

But in the U.S., where gasoline prices are much lower than in Brazil and most other countries, alcohol as a motor fuel is not yet competitive economically.

Nonetheless, with millions of acres being withdrawn from agricultural production to avoid unusable surpluses, there may be instances where biomass could make a significant contribution to motor fuel supplies.

The Nebraska "gasohol" program has already got the price of ethanol to within a few cents of the price of gasoline at the pump. And trucks operated by the State Highway Department are currently running on gasoline blended with 10 percent ethanol.

Oil company opposition has slowed progress toward this change in the U.S. In 1975, oil companies testified against a California plan to operate a fleet of experimental, state-owned cars on alcohol blends. Oil firms also opposed Nebraska's plans for a 10 percent alcohol/gasoline blend.

The most economical ways of using biomass fuels may well prove to be those that would make both energy and nonenergy use of biomass materials.

Hodam suggested that farm co-ops in the U.S. could build fermentation facilities to burn the excess crops that are not used for food each year. "Right now the material is just thrown away," he said.

The California Energy Commission has found that by integrating agriculture and energy production it should be possible to add stability to crop prices and still provide a reliable supply of energy each year.

Homemade or mass produced gasifiers, called "digesters," are also gaining popularity among American farmers. Like the Chinese peasant systems, these simple devices convert household wastes, crop stalks, grasses and animal manure into a non-toxic fuel for heating and electricity.

"As a result of both the independence of American farmers and the fact that they can do this themselves," said Hodam, "I think things will catch on."

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Steven Schneider monitors energy policy for the Third Century America Project and Pacific News Service.

CALIFORNIA'S SOLARCAL PROGRAM TAKES SHAPE

BY CHUCK SHERMAN

The California Campaign for Economic Democracy (CED), opening a new phase in its year-old drive for the "maximum feasible solarization" of California by 1990, has endorsed a package of 13 solar energy bills now before the California legislature. This action, taken at a steering committee meeting in Santa Barbara on the weekend of April 15 and 16, modifies the content of CED's previously announced "SolarCal" proposal, while giving it a specific and realizable form. (IN THESE TIMES, Feb. 15.)

Opinion in the legislature on the solar package has not crystallized, according to legislative insiders, but prospects for passage of solar legislation appear promising. Hovering in the background of the debate is Gov. Jerry Brown, with his sights set on the presidency and his immediate attention focused on a re-election campaign, who may be preparing a dramatic proposal of his own.

CED has been the animating force behind the push for solar in California, but key legislators such as Assemblyman Tom Bates (D-Oakland) and organizations such as the Public Policy Center and Sunrae have also played important roles.

The goal of SolarCal is the solarization of every feasible structure in California by 1990. One of the bills in the CED-endorsed solar package charges the California Energy Commission with developing a plan to achieve this objective, setting annual goals for solarizing space and water heating and for producing photovoltaic cells.

Other bills in the solar package seek to avoid corporate control of solar energy. One proposal prohibits investment in the solar industry by major energy corporations and restricts any company to a maximum of 10 percent of the solar market. Related bills outline strict rules that would make it very difficult for publicly regulated utilities to enter the solar market. To strengthen the competitive position of small businesses, legislation establishing a state fund to provide warranties for purchasers of solar equipment from small businesses has also been included in the package.

Most of the other SolarCal bills concern financing. A key proposal would create a state-owned, non-profit small business corporation to provide up to \$100 million in loans to small businesses engaged in manufacturing solar systems or which need financing to convert to energy conserving systems.

The most controversial bill in the package, at least to solar advocates, would require utilities to establish a long-term, low-interest loan program to finance solar energy systems. While some SolarCal supporters opposed giving the utilities this opportunity to build their credibility, most thought it was more important to tap the tremendous funds of the utilities and require these funds to be loaned at low interest rates for socially desirable purposes.

Major revisions.

SolarCal has undergone major revisions since it was first proposed last year. In its original form it was something between a statement of principles and a piece of legislation; more detailed than the former, too sketchy to be the latter. It rested on three main principles: establishment of a state authority to plan and oversee California's solarization, inclusion of a financing mechanism to realize the solar plan, and prohibition of corporate control of the solar market. These principles have been retained, but the means to accomplish them have been altered.

For example, the original proposal called for a new state cabinet-level agency to implement SolarCal. Opposition to this idea developed because there is already a state Energy Commission with a solar section, and solar opponents incited fears of a new bureaucratic monster. So the proposal for a solar super-agency has been scrapped.

Another important change is in the

method of financing. The initial proposal looked to the issuance of bonds as a major source of funding for SolarCal. But 1978 has turned out to be the year of a tax revolt in California, and there is an initiative on the June ballot to cut property taxes by more than 50 percent. It is not a year to ask California voters to approve a large bond issue, even for something as popular as solar energy.

Another part of the original SolarCal proposal was a provision to give priority for state financial support to solar energy businesses in which the employees have union representation. This idea was dropped because of doubts about its constitutionality and because it aroused substantial political opposition.

In the public support that has developed in California for solar energy, CED has played a vital role. The SolarCal proposal kicked off the formation of CED as it evolved from Tom Hayden's 1976 senatorial campaign, and CED has used SolarCal as its chief organizing tool in building itself as an organization as well as in building a broader solar movement.

Grassroots organizing.

The CED strategy for SolarCal has focused on grassroots lobbying to influence the legislature. A good example of CED's efforts at their most effective was seen in the district of Assemblyman Victor Calvo of Palo Alto, chair of the Assembly Energy Committee.

CED sent organizer Janet Kagan to Palo Alto to work with local CED members in mobilizing constituent sentiment behind SolarCal. CED people moved throughout the district, setting up information tables at shopping centers and on campuses, and contacting key groups and individuals. Calvo's Sacramento office was soon bombarded with over 1,200 letters and mailgrams supporting SolarCal-type legislation. Calvo is now an author of one of the major solar bills and a strong proponent of solar energy.

CED's strength, however, is not in legislative bill drafting and Sacramento lobbying. Legislative staffers responsible for drafting various pieces of the solar package say that CED representatives were often out of touch with the subtleties of legislative politics and were unable to translate their principles into sound legislation.

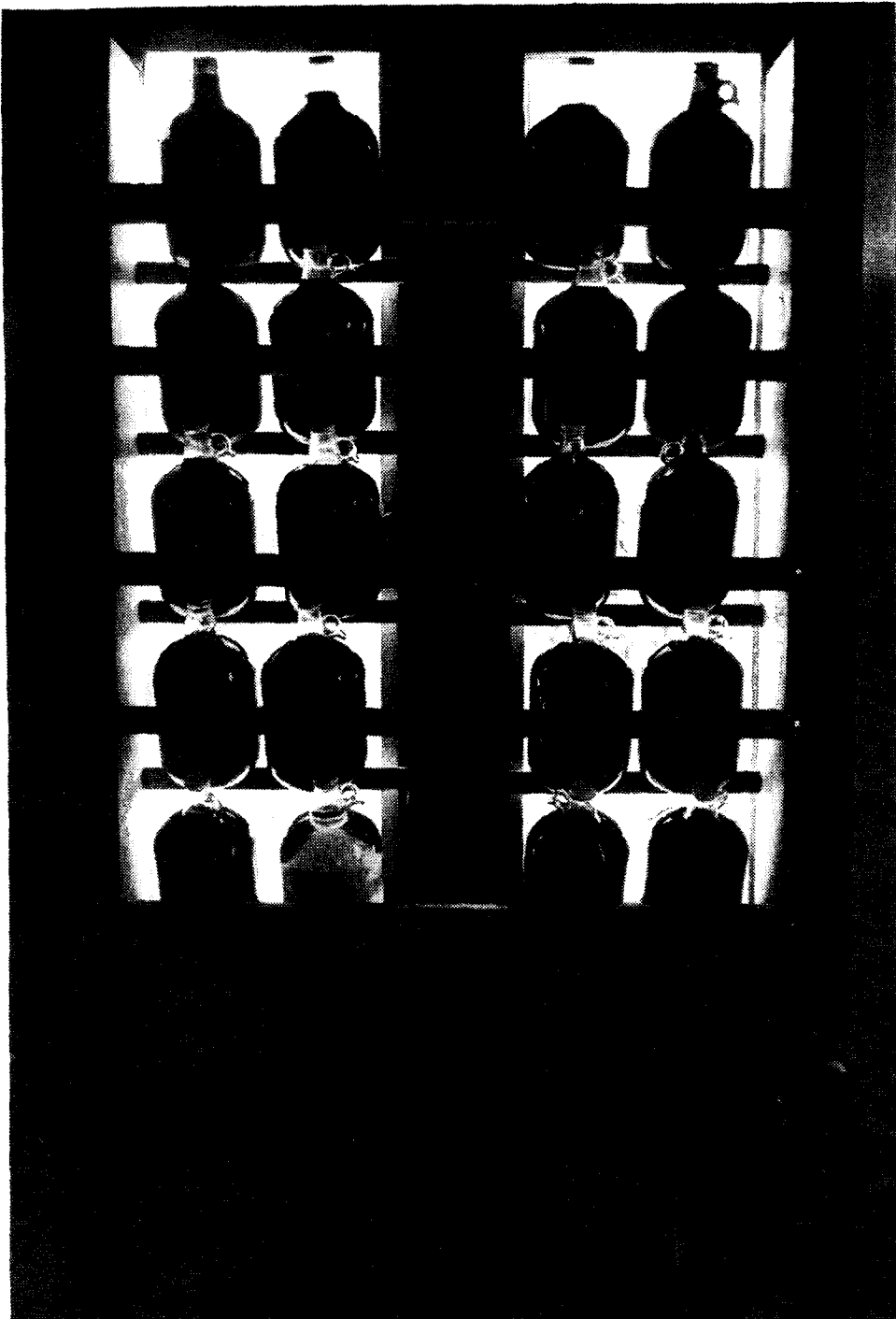
In fact, a lively battle for political credit for solar legislation is likely to ensue in Sacramento in the next several months. What CED calls the SolarCal package is seen by most legislators as a group of solar energy bills, not all necessarily connected, and certainly not all inspired by the original SolarCal proposal. Not surprisingly, the key solar energy advocates in the legislature believe that they, not CED, are the midwives of California's entrance into the solar age.

Nor should Gov. Brown be ignored in the scramble for political credit. Brown, who has become an increasingly effective anti-nuclear and pro-solar advocate but who has never endorsed SolarCal, is thought to be preparing to jump into the debate on his own, hoping to ride solar energy to re-election in 1978 and into the White House in 1980.

CED's grassroots lobbying campaign has kicked into high gear now that the 13-bill package has been endorsed. Much of the April CED steering committee was devoted to the nuts and bolts of the grassroots strategy. Time is short as important committee decisions are beginning to be made. Final action must come before September, when the California legislature adjourns.

If CED and other solar supporters are successful in the coming months, California may be the first state to commit itself to solar as the energy source of the future. The reverberations from that decision will be felt far beyond the state's borders.

Chuck Sherman is a reporter in the Bay Area.



Bottle wall in the bathroom. Bottles absorb heat during the day from sun coming through window and release it at night.



SOLAR ENERGY AND SOCIALIST POWER

With the full range of solar energy technologies now presenting a realistic alternative to greatly expanded coal, oil and nuclear power, the people of the United States have another opportunity, a political opportunity. They can seize on this transition between energy bases to reconstruct the economy as a whole—redefining what needs to be produced, how the work should be organized, what forms of individual or social ownership and control are desirable—instead of stopping with a solution to the immediate energy crisis.

Socialists have a special responsibility to stress the political choices in this transition and to show how the issue is not just where the energy is to come from but, as *Poverty of Power* author Barry Commoner stresses, how the production system is organized and governed.

But socialists also face a challenge. Clearly dissatisfied with the increasingly remote, insensitive, irresponsible concentrations of power in this country, many Americans are drawn to solar technologies because they see a path to self-reliance and decentralization, both of which are linked to traditional American ideals of liberty and democracy. That vision is also linked to an aversion to traditional U.S. images of socialism as One Big Bureaucracy—an image partly false, partly true.

There have always been strains of socialist thought that emphasized a devolution of power to cooperatives, collectives, soviets, communities, workers' councils and other small units and away from the centralized state. Yet those visions differ from much of current decentralist thought in their emphasis on the value of wider and wider circles of cooperation, not a retreat into tiny, isolated enclaves.

The decentralist thinking common today, which is prominent among advocates of solar and related alternative energy sources, often sees the alternatives for the technology in a way that mirrors existing social institutions. Either we have complicated, centralized, capital-intensive technology under the control of giant corporations or we have self-contained individual homes (or possibly communes), with their own solar collectors and compost heaps. This reflects the absence of strong social institutions in our society other than the family, on the one hand, and the corporation or the state, on the other.

Government takeover not enough.

Some alternative proposals essentially dream of a return to small, entrepreneurial businesses. Preferable though that might be in many instances to domination by Exxon, ARCO and GE, such a proposal ignores the dynamics of capitalism—regardless of its energy source—toward concentrated wealth and power. Socialists have realized that. Consequently, their standard formula is that the evils of capitalism can be solved by state or pub-

lic seizure and operation of the existing means of production.

That perspective is strong as far as it goes, but it doesn't go very far. Already the system of production—with its emphasis on petrochemicals, its assembly-line technology, its treatment of labor as an abstract factor of production—has been shaped to suit the needs of centralized capital. The entire economy and productive apparatus consequently must be overhauled and reconstructed, changing not only the source of energy to make it reliable, safe, environmentally benign, and cheap, but also the products, work relations and overall control of the use of that energy.

Public takeover of a nuclear power plant *might* make a slight improvement in safety over private operation with its cost-cutting emphases, but the Soviet Union so far has suffered the most catastrophic accident connected with nuclear power—a massive explosion in 1957 of a nuclear waste dump at Kyshtym. (See Andrew Cockburn, "The Nuclear Disaster They Didn't Tell You About," *Esquire*, April 25). Nuclear power, then, is simply the wrong way to go—publicly or privately.

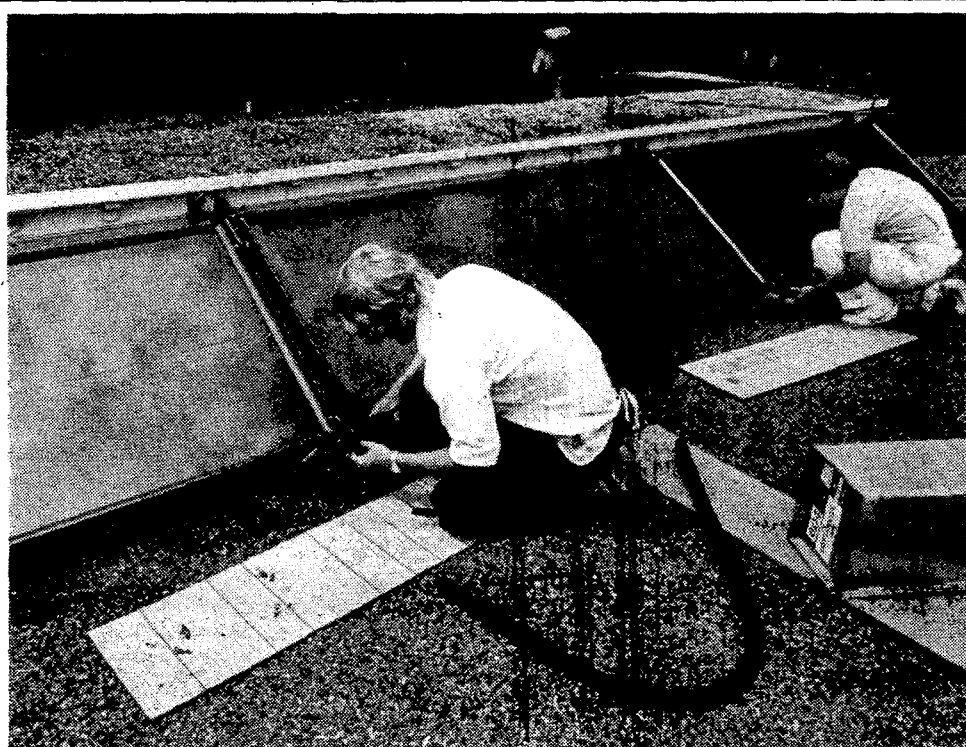
Yet public institutions must play a major role in the transition to a solar economy if the potential for full-scale reconstruction of the economy has a wisp of a chance. Left simply to market forces, the existing inequalities will probably be worsened, especially if the Carter policy of forcing conversion of the economy from oil and gas by driving up prices is approved. Even if the action of the free market were less inequitable, the point is moot since there isn't a free market in any classic sense. The energy corporations, not to mention other oligopolies, clearly have a financial and market power that makes a mockery of such free market nostrums.

Corporate obstruction.

First, we can expect the corporations to block or to complicate a solar transition. As that fails, they will attempt to defend their existing interests—for example, by raising utility rates—and to gain control of the new technology, either making it centralized under their operation or transformed into a commodity that they can market.

Some people may shrug and say that even such an option is an improvement. That's probably true, but it will mean that the full technological and social possibilities of solar energy will not develop.

Already one of the most imaginative proposals for solar development, the SolarCal plan in California, has suffered the slings and arrows of outrageous corporate fortunes. The early provision for a back-up state agency to produce solar equipment if the private producers could not satisfy the market has been dropped. Now it appears that resistance to either more taxes or state bonding authority—largely a consequence of a regressive tax



Larry Strain (left) and Diana Fett (right) of the Solar Center install rooftop solar collector for hot water in Mill Valley, Calif.

system that badly needs reform—may lead organizers to accept financing through the utilities.

At the federal level, a "solar coalition" of members of Congress and representatives of consumer, environmental, labor and business groups has proposed a modest but important package of legislation. Its most important elements are a solar energy bank, more money for solar development and a call for conversion of federal facilities to solar energy. But the forces lining up behind private market and corporate strategies, including influential environmentalists like Amory B. Lovins, are still winning the day. That's why the political clout of the new Citizen/Labor Energy Coalition is important. It may finally bring political pressure for a strong public role in a solar transition.

But what should that role be? Here socialists face a challenge to define a way for public, cooperative, non-profit, democratic institutions to gain control over the solar reconstruction of the economy. Simply calling for more federal action alone is inadequate. There must be a way of meeting the desire for a more decentralized control of the new technology. Not only is that politically desirable, since people with a direct control over the foundations of their livelihoods are more likely to be active in political decision-making, but also it will maximize the economic and technological potential of the solar strategy.

Community energy commissions.

One important step in defining a new decentralized approach to planning and control would be the creation of Community Energy Commissions throughout the country. The Commissions would be responsible for developing a comprehensive plan for solar conversion of the neigh-

borhoods—urban, rural and small town—that would integrate individual decisions, such as rooftop solar collectors, with community resources, such as windmills, small hydropower plants, small generators and cogeneration units that could heat numerous buildings, and other intermediate technology that most effectively uses the solar potential.

With money from federal loans and grants and possibly even from (guaranteed) bank loans, the commissions could also fund community consumer and producer cooperatives, guaranteeing that accumulated capital would return to the Commission for further projects and for funding regional undertakings. Each Commission could link with counterparts throughout the region to equalize disparities in resources (for example, making sure that surplus wastes from some areas could be used in others to generate gas) and to make regional plans.

With elected Commissioners and a technical and managerial staff, the Commission would be an ideal institution for stimulating neighborhood economic vitality and allowing for the full flexibility in adaptation to local conditions that solar technology allows and fully centralized planning or corporate market control frustrates.

The new solar technology, if it is to be used to construct a more democratic, equitable and stable economy, requires new institutions that depart from both the rule and ruin of corporate capitalism and from many of the commonplace assumptions of traditional socialist thought. The political issues are paramount; they cannot be swept aside in the rush for more photovoltaic cells and solar hot water heaters. The Community Energy Commissions would represent a good step forward to a democratic, solar, socialist America.

Letters

APRIL 17, 1943

WARSAW

THE FINAL
DESTRUCTION
OF THE JEWISH
GHETTO BEGINS



THE UPRISING
THAT FOLLOWS
IS THE FIRST
MAJOR CIVILIAN
REVOLT AGAINST
THE NAZIS

Correcting distortions about Jewish resistance

IN THESE TIMES HAS LENT ITSELF to dissemination of gross distortions of the facts regarding the Warsaw ghetto revolt (and history of ghetto Jews prior to the revolt) through the interview by Norman Finkelstein with his mother, Maryla Husyt. Finkelstein apparently made no effort to corroborate assertions based on her recollections of hearsay testimony regarding complex events which neither she nor any single witness could have fully participated in, by checking other sources of testimony and/or scholars' assessments of such testimony.

First, Husyt implied the Zionist Revisionists did not participate in the revolt at all. In fact, they did but were not integrated into the Jewish Fighting Organization, having built their own armed force, the ZZW, and being unable to agree on the terms of consolidation of the two forces. In other ghettos, such as Vilna, all Jewish parties, from the Revisionists to the Communists, were integrated into a single force. Facts regarding the ZZW contribution (it may well have contributed larger forces than that of any other party) are contained in the memoir of a participant, Chaim Lazar, *Muranowska 7* (Tel Aviv, 1966) and acknowledged in the reports of the Jewish Workers' Bund (Marek Edelman, *The Ghetto Fights*, Warsaw, 1945), and are summarized in Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, p. 321. The revisionists also contributed to the ideological education of Mordecai Anielewicz who began his political career as a member of Betar, their youth organization.

Second, the great opportunities offered to Jews to escape to the Soviet Union (and the self-delusion of the Jewish middle classes) are grossly exaggerated: "When it became obvious that we were doomed, the middle class was still afraid to go to Russia." Husyt neglected to acknowledge that by that time Germany had invaded the Soviet Union and was steadily massacring Jews all over the eastern front. Transport to the Soviet Union was not possible and (had it been possible) would have exposed Jews to imminent death unless they managed to pass as Aryans.

Finally, as to the paths of survival, Husyt's assertion that the majority of Jews who emigrated either to the U.S. or Israel were saved by the Soviet Union and "did not see the concentration camps or the Nazi persecution" is based on nothing more than an assertion evident-

ly. Although I have not seen differential cross-tabulations of American or Israeli immigration of that period, both the report of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry in 1946 (see Appendix III) and Malcolm J. Proudfoot's *European Refugees, 1939-1952* (Evanston, Ill., 1956), Ch. XI, shows that the majority of European Jews surviving on the continent who were not Soviet nationals had either fled to allied or neutral territory, or evaded or survived deportation and incarceration. Of course, the majority of Jews who were Soviet citizens in 1939 who survived did so with the aid of the Soviet state as they were transported to the interior along with other citizens evacuated. There is no evidence of any priority given Jews as Jews to escape the Nazi path.

Finkelstein and Husyt have used the device of the interview as a prism through which to present her conclusions as to the lack of political justification of present Israeli policy, seeking to discredit her ideological opponents. This is a shabby device, which avoids justifying her conclusions and overlooks the tragic dilemmas of an encircled minority arising both from the memory of the Holocaust and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

I do not agree with either the ideological turnings or the tactics of the Begin administration but do not see the Israeli dilemma can be so smugly simplified as Finkelstein and Husyt have done by casting doubt on the legitimacy of the present Israeli government (elected as democratically as all previous governments there) or denying the fact that heirs of Jabotinski served the Jewish armed resistance during the Holocaust.

Background for this letter is based on my research over the past five years for an explanation of the causes of national differences in Jewish victimization during the Holocaust, to be published this fall as *Accounting for Genocide* by The Free Press.

—Helen Fein
New Paltz, N.Y.

Husyt interview misleading and anti-Israel

NORMAN FINKELSTEIN'S interview with his mother (*ITT*, Apr. 19) may have been one person's recollections of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, but it hardly enlightens anyone. It merely seems to fit in with *ITT*'s continuing requirement for an anti-Israel piece-of-the-month.

There is sufficient, if not overwhelming evidence and documentation available to counter many of the gross distortions recited in the interview, which could easily have been checked, but it is obvious that you would not wish to be confused with the facts.

It is difficult to accept Maryla Husyt's version of Mordecai Anielewicz's "dream" since it presupposes a condition that did not exist at the time. It is extremely difficult to swallow latter-day juxtapositions inasmuch as the issue then was not even survival, but how many Nazis could be taken before the resistors eventually were killed.

Anielewicz, then ZOB commandant, on April 23, 1943, in fact sent a letter to his friend Yitzhak Zuckerman, saying: "It is now quite clear to me that what took place exceeded all expectations." He asked Zuckerman, who was outside the Wall, to get rifles, hand grenades, machine guns, and explosives. Sooner or later, he believed, everyone would die. Still, he wrote, "the last wish of my life has been fulfilled. Jewish self-defense has become a fact. Jewish resistance and revenge have become realities." On May 8, the Germans surrounded the hideout of ZOB headquarters. The Germans stopped up all the entrances to the bunker and sent gas in. More than 100 fighters were inside. Rather than fall into the hands of the Nazis, they began to kill themselves and each other, in a scene that must have rivaled the mass suicide at Masada.

Anielewicz was among them. Out of the ashes of the Warsaw Ghetto arose a new spirit, forged in fury in the spirit of Mordecai Anielewicz and the others. It was this spirit that assured the rebirth of Israel and will assure its con-

tinuity along with the other values that have contributed to the survival of the Jewish people, the same ethical values that provided the wellspring for socialism.

Maxim Litvinov's admonition to the League of Nations: "Peace is Indivisible" was never truer! There is the injunction today that extends Litvinov's slogan even further and reiterates the slogan "Never Again" that arose out of the Warsaw Ghetto and the Holocaust.

—Julius Rivkind
San Francisco

A disgrace and an outrage

YOUR INTERVIEW OF MARYLA Husyt on the Warsaw Ghetto uprising was a disgrace and an outrage. In and of itself, use of any aspect of the Holocaust as a pretext for an attack on the state of Israel is objectionable both politically and morally. The question of Zionism is no longer being debated as an abstract position, as one among many alternatives for the world's Jewish population. Israel exists; some three million Jews live there, and their survival depends on the continued existence of that state.

Around the world, Israel commands the support of the Jewish community, including non-Zionist and even former anti-Zionist currents. To millions of non-Jews, like myself, the destruction of Israel, the denial of the basic right of self-determination to the Jewish people is simply unacceptable.

In this article, as in your previous Middle East coverage, *ITT* has continually stressed that Israel lacks historic legitimacy (even has its roots in fascism!), that it is pursuing aggressive, even genocidal policies. To the best of my recollection not even one article has appeared in your pages attempting to understand the difficult situation facing the Israelis. Not once have I seen a word of criticism on Arab irredentism. And now you use the Warsaw ghetto uprising for another attack.

Then, you add insult to the grievous injury. The Israelis, according to your interview, did not experience the Nazi terror because "they were saved in Russia." After the Khrushchev revelations on Stalin's anti-Semitism, after the voluminous research of Roy Medvedev on Soviet anti-Semitism under Stalin, it takeschutzpah on the part of interviewer, interviewed and editors to let that statement appear in print.

—Jack Clark
New York

[Editor's note: The interview with Maryla Husyt was not intended as a pretext to attack the state of Israel. True, Husyt criticizes Begin and Israeli government policies, but it never occurred to us to read her views as questioning Israel's right to exist as a nation. Rather, we thought they represent humanist and progressive concerns of many Jewish people, including many Israelis, which can only reflect honor upon Israel and its supporters.]

We don't think it can be fairly inferred from Husyt's views that Israel "has its roots in fascism." In neither our editorials nor our news coverage have we "stressed that Israel lacks historic legitimacy."

On the contrary, our editorials have stressed that Israel's nationhood is beyond question, and that the PLO should recognize it. We also stress that Israel should recognize Palestinian nationhood, and that the peace and security of Israel and the Palestinians require such mutual recognition. We believe Israel has the right to be treated as a state no different from other states, but then its government policies also must be judged by the same criteria applied to other states. We are acutely aware of the "difficult situation" facing the Israeli people, and also that facing the Palestinians. We believe our news coverage, though it can always be improved, has on the whole represented and contributed to deepening such an awareness.

On the question of Russia, Husyt expresses her belief that most European Jews who escaped the Holocaust "were

saved by the Russians" and most of those among them who subsequently emigrated to Israel or the U.S. "were saved in Russia." She invites whomever "sees it differently...[to] stand up and challenge me." She may be wrong. But the undoubted fact of Soviet, and Stalin's, anti-Semitism does not refute her belief, however refutable it may be.

It may bechutzpah, but it is our editorial policy not to suppress but to print disagreeable statements, even "wrong" opinions where it is obvious that they are opinions and not presented as established fact, and to trust to open debate as the best check on error or bad reasoning.]

Needed reminder against moral absolutism

THANK YOU FOR BILL SMOOT'S "Perspective" piece on leftist moralism (*ITT*, Apr. 19). The moralism he comments on tends to impart to socialism the character of a secular religion—with an orthodoxy, an apostolic and scriptural tradition, and a hierarchy of its own. Also, as Smoot's examples illustrate, a bureaucratic temperament, despite the lack of a fixed Chancery Office.

Insofar as we assume socialism to have a corner on political wisdom—by some transcendent authority we dismiss as arbitrary and medieval when it appears elsewhere—we are operating in the realm of faith. And our belief is no more inherently plausible than any traditional religious doctrine.

Socialists are often not very worldly, in spite of their intentions. Programs tend to be viewed not as pragmatic solutions to problems but as the fulfillment of the gospels. Which is another way of saying that true belief cuts off peripheral vision. It gets in the way of a clear view of the frailties, contingencies and hazards of any institutional/ideological route to that kaleidoscope of intersecting factors and variables thought of as—what else can I call it?—salvation.

Bill Smoot gave us a good homily, a needed reminder that the imposition of one's own absolutes on the morally intimidated and the exchange of one's "conceptual idol" for another don't result in a new age.

—Maureen Mullarkey
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Smoot's point questionable

BILL SMOOT'S POINT IS WELL taken. It is far too easy for leftist critics to be self-righteous, or "moralist," and too few of us avoid the danger. Nonetheless, many will disagree with at least one of his illustrations. It seems clear to me that segregation breeds and perpetuates racism; the two go hand in hand. It seems equally clear that opposition to busing, when busing is absolutely necessary to end segregation, is support for segregation. Therefore it is objectively racist to fight against busing. This is an inclusive statement.

It doesn't alter the case if one is motivated to oppose busing in order to support all kinds of otherwise admirable things, such as a neighborhood school for one's own child, a stress-free atmosphere for one's own child, and so on. In today's segregated world such advantages are simply illustrations of American white skin privilege. They are not available to all. They will never be available for all until we get integrated schools and an integrated society. Therefore it is objectively racist to oppose busing of children when only busing can make it possible to integrate our segregated schools. It is not intolerant, self-righteous or moralist to point out this truth. It is a duty which those who live in ghettos owe to people who live with privilege in a racist society.

True, there are ghetto residents who also oppose busing. Such opposition, we need hardly add, is not an effort to preserve privilege. It is rooted in despair which privileged opponents of busing can only deepen.

—William Doyle
History Department
Los Angeles Southwest College

Correction

Notice of copyright was left off two articles on cloning: one written by Ted Howard and Jeremy Rifkin and one written by David Rivkin. In our April 12-18 issue. Both articles were distributed and copyrighted by Pacific News Service. We apologize for the error.

PERSPECTIVES

□ FOR A NEW AMERICA □

For a socialism that works: Part I

With this three-part series, we hope to inaugurate in these pages an ongoing exploration of what an American form of socialism would look like, how it would work, and what it would reject or build upon in the American historical experience. We invite critical or favorable responses to the series as well as original articles on the subject. Our hope is to stimulate American socialists to develop critical and concrete thinking about the practical problems of a socialist economy in the U.S.

By Leland Stauber

Our present social system is inadequate for two basic reasons.

First, a society in which 10 percent of American families own more than half of all personally held wealth in the nation is socially "democratic" only in pretense. Pretense is not good enough.

Experience shows that "progressive taxation" does not prevent such concentration of wealth—when most big business and most investment funds are privately owned. There are four reasons for this:

1) Once such accumulations of wealth have been allowed to exist, the very big money that would be the target of any such tax efforts will be used in politics to fight those efforts and to obtain countless loopholes benefiting the rich.

2) The wealthy tend to save far higher percentages of their incomes than the rest of us because it is easy. If any radical soaking of the rich actually occurred and the proceeds were simply distributed to the rest of us as tax reductions, the rest of us would not save the same proportion of this amount as occurs when the rich possess it. The very concentration of wealth and incomes is part of the secret of "voluntary" savings in a capitalist system. While this problem can be solved by expanding the role of government in the saving process, through taxation, and contracting the role of private savings, concern with this problem is a political obstacle to any radical redistributive taxation—in an economy that is supposed to operate mainly on a "private enterprise" basis.

3) If privately owned funds are to be relied upon for investment, they must be lured into investment by the prospect of private gain, and the amounts of private gain must be sufficient to outweigh the risks, to overcome the attractions of alternative ways of spending the same funds, and to spark the initiative required to seek out and oversee new investment. If society is to rely heavily upon this process for investment, then, beyond some point, there is no way the rewards can be taxed severely without damaging the incentives that actuate this process, particularly in the riskier types of investment.

4) The wealthy protect themselves by building wide political alliances against redistributive taxation. Their trump card is belief in the idea of speculative investment by individuals in the minds of the general public. This is a matter, then, of the political climate necessary for implementing, and sustaining, tax measures effective in eliminating large individual and family wealth from the social system. The most effective solution to this problem is an institutional one in which all large economic enterprises, and all land, are under public ownership and individual citizens no longer play a direct role in providing investment funds for big business.

For the above four reasons, only a so-

cialist economic system can meet these latter specifications—not the attempt to marry "progressive taxation" to private ownership of big business—and be effective in achieving more genuine social equality. It has been customary for our political leaders to talk as if they are ignorant of these elemental realities.

Our present economic system is unacceptable, however, also for a second, and political, reason. The progressive-liberal movement of this century has perennially failed to override the political power of the conservative business community sufficiently to produce a decent society under modern conditions, both in regard to the needs of the vast majority of ordinary Americans and in regard to the American underclass living in poverty in urban ghettos and in rural areas. This business political power has two basic sources:

1) The concentration of wealth and income looms large in the financing of both major parties and in the more subtle and long-term conditioning of public opinion by continuous propaganda financed by wealthy backers.

2) The propaganda of the wealthy, however, has great leverage because it plays upon an individualistic ideology that is not, and never was, appropriate to a modern industrial society, but retains wide influence within the American general public.

The most effective way to change both of these simultaneously is through a politics of class conflict of a type that isolates an upper class minority and succeeds in changing the ownership of big business and in bringing extensive leveling taxation.

The bearing of such a transformation upon the first problem is obvious.

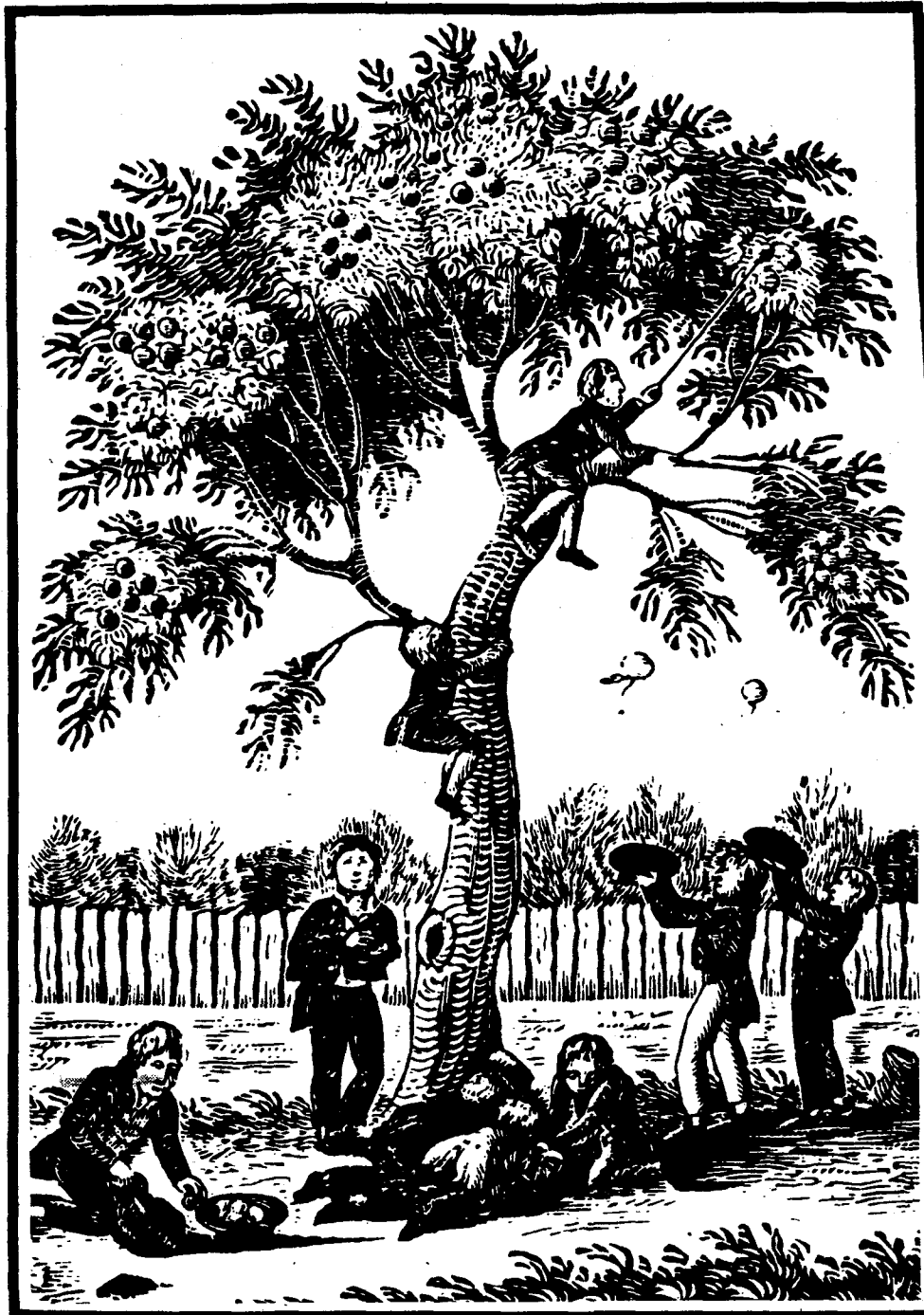
Its bearing on the second problem, on the other hand, involves a whole series of relationships, and not all of these are generally understood by Americans of socialist sympathy. (See my "The Implications of Market Socialism in the United States," *Polity*, Fall 1975.) Centrally important, however, is this: American individualistic ideology originates in the first place, not in "wisdom and experience," but in the American *lack* of experience with social revolution against an upper class minority. There is no way the U.S. could eventually have such an experience, which would require extensive use of national government power, without in the process becoming far more accustomed to using government power and activity for countless other social purposes. The most effective cure for the belief that government action is "sinful" is for the general public to have a really pleasurable experience with the use of government power.

Toward an American socialism.

If we devised a type of socialism that a majority of Americans would not only accept, but also like and enjoy and then contrived to carry it into reality, the result would be an enormous liberation from a tyranny of the mind. Along a vast front in the efforts of America's liberal reformers, in countless fields, gone would be the argument that "we can't do that because that would be socialism."

Our liberal political leaders have been accustomed to saying that "socialism is irrelevant to American problems." In terms of the objectives these same leaders have defined to be the main American problems, nothing could be further from the facts.

If the American press and politicians have been telling us nonsense about socialism, they have been rivaled in this by



socialists themselves. When it comes to devising an economically efficient replacement for private ownership of corporate business throughout the economy generally (as opposed to public ownership of utilities and a few other special industries), the 20th century has been a graveyard of inadequate socialist ideas.

While efficiency is not the only important value, when economic resources are wasted through inefficiency less resources are available for other purposes, including social objectives deemed essential by socialists. Moreover, when a socialist movement identifies itself with ideas that, if adopted, would mean a significant loss of economic efficiency compared to private ownership of corporate business, it will virtually guarantee political defeat.

If the aim is an economic system that is at least as efficient as private capitalism but with the removal of private ownership of corporate business, then a whole series of simple-minded beliefs will have to be shaken out of the heads of American socialists. Nothing less than a large-scale revision of the most fundamental preconceptions that currently prevail among American socialists is required—a revision that is both "conservative" and radical simultaneously.

European experience.

In Eastern Europe practical experience with socialism has for years brought shifts toward greater use of market mechanisms, in the context of socialized ownership of enterprises. In the U.S., however, market socialism is widely considered to be "reactionary," for many American socialists are still so exclusively preoccupied with reacting against the market that they fail to see the great value of the market in imposing, and forcing less productive enterprises into bankruptcy and dissolution. There are major needs for social and economic planning, on a selective and pragmatic basis. But sweeping rejection of the market and the call for its indiscriminate replacement by "democratic planning" is a bankrupt idea. The only possibility for reconciling general public ownership of corporate business with political democracy and an efficient economy lies in the use, for the great bulk of the economy, of some type of market socialism.

An equally widely held belief is that full control of management by the employees will automatically coincide with

the requirements for efficient economic performance. But the evidence for this belief, from experience in Yugoslavia and many other countries, is mixed. Workers' self-management may improve morale, and has worked well in many very small enterprises. But it can also mean, particularly in large and complex organizations, that the decision-making process can become slow and ponderous, handicapping the firm in adjusting rapidly to changing market conditions. Workers have often forced decisions against the better judgment of a manager, and then when the decision led to disaster workers have often blamed the manager instead of themselves. Nor is the democratic will of the employees of a particular enterprise relevant for deciding when it is economic, from the point of view of the economy as a whole, to close down an unprofitable enterprise. By contrast, partial employee representation in management, and an employee veto power over decisions affecting safety, could bring many improvements with less risk of significant damage to efficiency.

The type of socialist economic system that would be most efficient is also what would be most strategic in allowing very broad political alliances against a wealthy upper class minority. The defence of private corporate capitalism has rested on confusing it with a market economy. By devising a workable way of organizing a market socialism, American socialists, and social-democrats everywhere, could concentrate on exposing the difference between the needs of a "market economy" and the desire of the rich to stay rich, thereby driving a wedge splitting capitalist ideology itself in two. By doing this, they could break out of their defensive conservatism and isolation and go on the political offensive.

American socialists could at last unravel the ideology that has held American minds in its grip for so long.

(Part II, a model of a socialist economy.) Leland Stauber is professor of political science, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. He is the author of the forthcoming book, *Market Socialism and the Problems of Control: A Reappraisal of Practical Experience*. The views outlined in this three-part series are presented in greater detail in his article, "A Proposal for a Democratic Market Economy," *Journal of Comparative Economics*, September 1977.

LIFE IN THE U.S.

SPORTS

A contest of hopes and dreams

By Donald Venes & W.D. Ehrhart

TWENTY-TWO TOUGH AMATEUR fighters squared off April 7 at Chicago's International Amphitheater in the oldest boxing rivalry in the country: the Chicago-New York Intercity Golden Gloves Championship. It was more than a boxing match; it was a contest of dreams and hopes.

The competitors made their livings as plumbers, meat luggers and warehousemen, physical education instructors, stock clerks and handymen, child counselors and hod carriers and students.

They were mostly inner city kids, largely black and Puerto Rican. Two by two, they stepped into the ring to test their courage and skills and their desire to lift themselves out of the anonymity of the work-a-day world through boxing.

The Chicago-New York tournament is an appropriate forum for such dreams, boasting a clear tradition of showcasing future professional champions. In the past 25 years Sugar Ray Robinson, Sonny Liston, Floyd Patterson, Ernie Terrell, Emile Griffith, Jose Torres and Muhammad Ali were all amateur Intercity champs.

This year, when the last victor's arms had been raised and the final score sheets tallied, the New Yorkers came out on top, taking seven of the 11 three-round bouts on the Olympic weightclass card.

The totals accurately reflected the strengths of the two teams. The Chicagoans took one questionable decision, but a technical misunderstanding resulted in a win for New York. The New Yorkers, for the most part, showed better conditioning, more accurate punching, harder physiques and more skillful use of combinations and footwork.

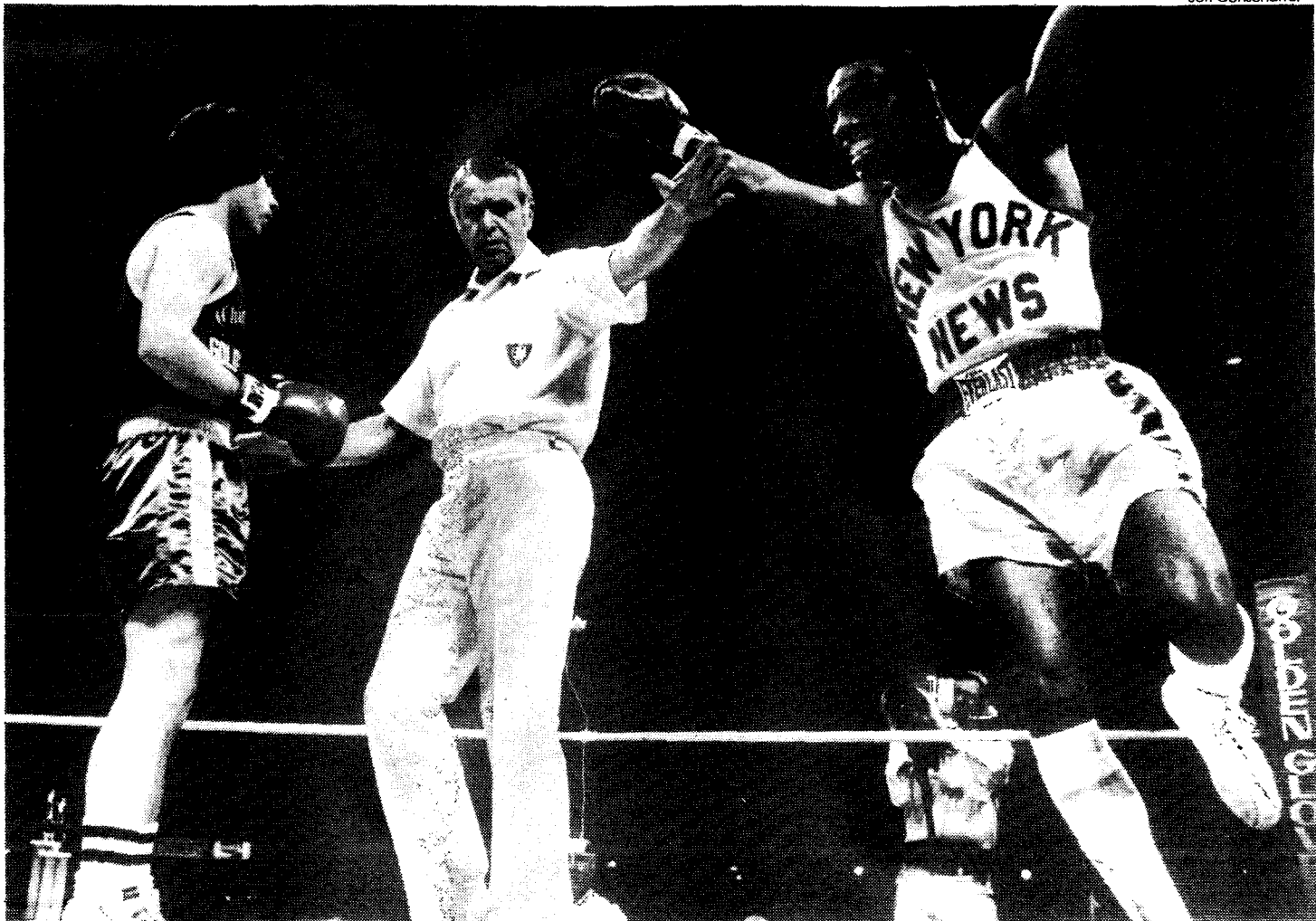
"We trained hard for this one," said Alex Ramos of the Bronx after winning the 156 lb. title. The 17-year-old student said the New York team, in preparing for the fights, had run as a group "four to five miles daily on top of our usual boxing practice. And we ran fast. I know," he added, "because I also run for my high school track team."

Conditioning is crucial.

Ramos demonstrated the benefits of conditioning in his lopsided decision over Chicago's Brian Matthews. Ramos came out hard in round one, throwing clusters of photon-fast punches from his tightly composed stance. Several of his hits staggered Matthews early; Matthews became hesitant and began to cover up along the ropes. The point-conscious Ramos persevered, jabbing through Matthews' defenses.

In round two Ramos again took Matthews to task with an early display of power, then stalked him from corner to corner, stacking him up against the ropes and working on his head and body. By round three Matthews was exhausted and clearly outpointed. After the final bell he shuffled, head down, back to his corner. The well-oiled Ramos was just warming up, however; he refused water and a towel-off after the fight. He says he wants a crack at the 1980 Olympics.

Another Olympic hopeful in the competition was Chicago's light-heavyweight champion, Leeroy Murphy. His bout with Ronald Huston of Weehawken, N.J., had been slated by pre-fight pundits as the class match-up of the evening. Murphy has a deceptively smooth style that belies his awesome power. Though Huston had won six straight Golden Gloves fights (all by knockouts) before the Intercity bout, the contest lasted just 49 seconds, con-



New York's John Hodge (right) stopped Peter Sanchez of Chicago in the first round of their 132 lb. fight in the Intercity Golden Gloves competition.

sisting of little more than three punches: a right by Murphy to Huston's jaw, putting Huston on the canvas for a mandatory eight-count; a short left leaving the Jerseyan open; and a final grinding right that left Huston down for the full count. Huston, tended to immediately by ringside physicians, was incapacitated for several minutes.

Speed and skill.

To many people the physical abuse taken by boxers in the ring is evidence enough to indict the sport as an overly violent parade of dumb brutes with ham-sized fists. Certainly slugging power has a great deal to do with boxing prowess. But so do speed, conditioning, quick thinking and athletic coordination. And boxing, like fencing, is a controlled violence that must be tempered with finesse, ring sense and defensive strategy.

The 139 lb. division provided a case in point, featuring New York's William Costello, a classic puncher with the power to dent iron, against Chicago's Paul Williams, a veteran of four years of Chi-town Golden Gloves victories. Costello opened the fight looking for a knockout, scoring several strikes that hurt Williams badly. But Williams' boxing sense told him that heavy-fisted fighters tire quickly, and his cold resolve supported him through the onslaught that began each round. As Costello faded, Williams would begin to turn the tables on him, throwing flurries of light strokes to the midsection of his arm-weary opponent.

It was clear that Williams could not hurt Costello, but he racked up points on unanswered contacts, and though the judges awarded the match to Costello, it was the closest decision of the night: 3-2. The effect of Costello's blows, taking their toll on Williams, made the difference.

Wayne Lynum, Chicago's victorious 119-pounder, explained his ring philosophy while icing a swollen hand he had earned from a game New Yorker, Carmelo Negron: "I want to box the man. I don't want to fight him unless I have to. That's the way you get hurt. I want to stick him, then move side to side, make

him miss me. When he covers, I 'double up,' throwing quick combinations. Then I get out of there." A national Golden Gloves champion and veteran of nearly 120 fights, Lynum knows, barring a knockout, it's not just the power of the punches that scores points with the judges but the number of unanswered blows a fighter can land.

The emphasis on contact was evident in Chicagoan Kenny Jones' 125 lb. victory over Richard Flores of the Bronx. Flores landed some heavy shots but not enough to slow Jones down. Jones kept swinging away, making contact repeatedly. "He gave me a good fight," Flores said later, "but he didn't hurt me. He wasn't hurting me. I wasn't in trouble." The decision, however, went to Jones.

Referees supervise.

Nevertheless, the reputation of ignorant violence persists—the stereotypical image of cauliflower-eared, punch-drunk fighters dropped into the ring and left to do their damndest. The stereotype has some historical basis. The ancient Greeks wrapped nothing more than leather thongs over their fists and went to it, often literally fighting it out to the death. As late as 1889, English bareknuckle boxing was hardly more controlled. A round was won by a knockdown, whether that took three seconds or 30 minutes, and fights continued until one of the contestants was unable to get up again.

In modern boxing, with the addition of heavily padded gloves, timed rounds, victory by decision and other safety features, the murderous edge has largely been blunted—though serious accidents, and even death, still sometimes occur in the ring. Amateur boxing, in particular, is closely supervised and the referee and the rule of law prevail over the anarchy of emotion.

In the 132 lb. competition New Yorker John Hodge's hard, fast swinging decked Peter Sanchez in the first 30 seconds. Up again, Sanchez took another withering series of punches, but amazingly, refused to go down a second time. Dazed and battered, he stood in the center of the ring,

ready for more punishment. Realizing Hodge clearly had the better of the Chicagoan, the referee interceded, stopping the fight at 1:09 of the first round.

"Ref, that's a good move you made," someone in the audience shouted. Later at ringside, the referee said quietly, "I didn't want to see the kid get hurt."

The referee played a deciding role in the evening's final match-up as well, the heavyweight bout between Edward Gregg and Renould Snipes. Unlike some of their lighter counterparts, heavyweights have the strength to do considerable damage with just an errant blow. Snipes and Gregg, neither of whom showed the polish of some of the lighter boxers, both came out looking to fell timber. A random right from Gregg, the big New Yorker, caught the Chicago fighter in the middle of an exchange of blows. Taking a standing eight-count, Snipes recovered quickly, but made the mistake of leaning nonchalantly on the ropes as the referee counted.

"I gave out very clear instructions early in the night," the ref said later, explaining why he had turned the mandatory count into a knockout. "I told the boys that when you take a count, you got to hold yourself up. Now this kid Snipes showed up late and missed the instructions and that's his fault. We don't want fighters who can't stand up on their own staying in the ring."

The anti-climactic finish of the heavyweight bout, however, did not reflect the excitement of the evening. With only one or two exceptions, the amateur card was an action-packed, well-paced sampler of boxing talent. Compared to the last few years, during which an aging Muhammad Ali won the money while slouching past the Alfredo Evangelistas and Chuck Wepners of the boxing world, the Intercity Golden Gloves Championship had it all. Like the young Leon Spinks, the amateur fighters put on a remarkable display of developing skills, courage and desire. A few of them just may box their way into the future.

Donald Venes and W.D. Ehrhart are writers in Chicago.

By Hal Aigner

WHY IS IT THAT A WALK by the sea or a visit to a waterfall can be so invigorating while a day in the city can leave you tired and irritable even when you've been relaxing? Research conducted for two decades at the University of California, Berkeley, under the direction of Dr. Albert Paul Krueger, professor emeritus of biometeorology, suggests the answer may lie in understanding electrical balances in the air and the role played by ions.

Ions are tiny clusters of airborne gases attached to a negative or positive electrically charged molecule. They occur freely in nature, generated from many sources, including cosmic rays and ultraviolet radiation, energy emissions from radioactive substances in soil and rock, the spray from waterfalls and the crash of surf on coastal shores.

Despite their infinitesimal size, these ions are capable of producing strange and powerful physiological and psychological effects. This is true particularly for the 15-30 percent of the population that is especially weather sensitive.

On the basis of 75 research papers from his own laboratory and several thousand papers detailing the work of fellow ion researchers in other countries, Dr. Krueger can attest to a long list of these ion effects—a list that is both unnerving and encouraging.

Air laden with positive ions is damaging to humans and some other animals tested. Inhalation of excessive doses may cause aching joints, insomnia, irritability, hot and cold flashes, diarrhea, vertigo and inhibited delivery of oxygen to various parts of the body.

In positive-ion heavy air, sinuses turn against hay fever victims. Asthmatics develop lung congestions. Secretaries and bosses snap at each other. Elderly people become depressed, apathetic, fatigued.

But negatively charged atmospheric ions, supplied in modest quantities of from 3,000 to 5,000 per cubic centimeter of air, relieve these symptoms. In addition, they stimulate increased energy, exhilaration, spontaneous activity, greater sexual inclination and enjoyment and improved mental alertness and psychomotor performance.

In negative ion-laden air, psychoneurotic and somatic complaints have been known to disappear; viral and bacterial growths, including influenza, are retarded, and burns heal faster with fewer scars. Houseplants thrive.

Generally, both kinds of ions are generated together. There are places and times, however, where they occur unevenly.

At waterfalls and near ocean surf, the positive ions tend to sink down in larger drops of water while the negative ones rise with the spray and therefore occur more densely in the surrounding atmosphere.

In desert and mountain regions, during legendary ill winds, positive ions are overabundant. Such winds are the Rocky Mountains' Chinook, the Midwest's Sharav, and the Föhn of the Northern Alpine Valley. In Southern California there is the Santa Ana, described by Raymond Chandler in a short story, *Red Wind*:

"There was a desert wind blowing that

ENVIRONMENT

ACCENTUATE THE NEGATIVE ELIMINATE THE POSITIVE



night. It was one of those hot dry Santa Anas that come down through the mountain passes and curl your hair and make your nerves jump and your skin itch. On nights like that every booze party ends in a fight. Meek little wives feel the edge of the

carving knife and study their husbands' necks. Anything can happen."

One explanation holds that as winds blow through arid areas, they stir up dust and lose their negative charge, for dust and other particulates leech out negative

ions. As they breeze into populated areas, they then poison bodies and souls with a surplus of the positive.

Cities tend to duplicate many of the natural conditions that favor positive ions. Urban pollutants react with ions in much the same way as natural particulates. Auto exhaust, factory fumes, tire dust and tobacco smoke all drain the beneficial electricity out of the downtown environment and leave the detrimental behind.

Cities also tend to create large pockets of air with no ions at all. Plastics, synthetic fibers and other objects that pick up electrical charges remove ions from the air. So do the metal ducts covering heating and air conditioning outlets; so do the synthetic materials of clothing and furniture coverings; and so do metal screens.

The Soviets have experimented with raising mice in an ion-depleted atmosphere. Within a few weeks, all of them died. The Japanese have found that ion-depleted air can induce somnolence and depression.

Unlike other grim environmental reports, however, this one points to a hopeful development: Electronic designers have developed several models of low-cost negative ion generators, ranging from small devices for personal use to major systems.

But there's a problem. The history of ion generator sales is not unblemished. During the '50s, similar devices were marketed under spurious claims. They were, for example, hawked as cancer medicine. The federal Food and Drug Administration clamped down and has not lifted its ban on the machine yet—which explains why news of ions and their effects hasn't much left the lab and seeped into the popular consciousness.

As scientific data continues to accumulate, however, Dr. Krueger predicts that "There's every reason to expect engineers and environmentalists to get together and supply us with air that is not only pollutant free but also has the air ion level and charge restored to that which prevails in nature."

(©1978 Pacific News Service)

Hal Aigner is a writer specializing in scientific subjects.

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ART «» ENTERTAINMENT

BOOKS



Jane Melnick

David vs. agribusiness Goliath

THE UNSETTLING OF
AMERICA: Culture and
Agricultureby Wendell Berry
Sierra Club Books, 1977, \$9.95

A poet and Kentucky farmer, Wendell Berry goes forth like Don Quixote to do battle against stupendous foes—modern American agriculture and the society that spawns it. It should be the easiest thing in the world to sympathize with his argument and yet ignore it, for *The Unsettling of America* hits us hard in the bread basket.

With the growth in power of American corporations over the years, agriculture—like everything else in our society—has changed. In place of the small, self-sufficient, self-perpetuating family farm, we now have the large, highly-mechanized, “specialized” industrial farm. In the name of twin gods—profit and production—thousands of small farms and millions of acres have been transformed into capital-intensive agribusiness installations.

Twenty-five million people have been forced from the U.S. farming community since 1940. “Get big, or get out!” has been the commercial rule and government policy as well. The USDA, swooning over its yearly production figures and dreaming of international “agridollars” (“Food is a weapon!”), condones the squeezing of even higher profits from the chemicalized, compacted, depleted land. Private interest controls the “public good.” Earl Butz, for example, received his agriculture indoctrination as an executive with Ralston-Purina.

Like Barry Commoner, Wendell Berry knows how “giant corporations have made a colony out of rural America.” Such food-marketing companies as General Foods and Del Monte have been joined by conglomerates like ITT, Boeing, and Dow to make agribusiness America’s largest industry. These, in effect, are the new American farmers. Tenneco produces oil and chemicals, but also insecticides, fertilizers, and farm machinery. This “farmer” also owns Heggebladde - Marguelas

Inc., the nation’s largest marketer of fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as a piece of California farmland twice the size of Rhode Island.

Everywhere we look it seems inevitable that agriculture, as Berry puts it, is now “purely a commercial concern; its purpose

**To live at the
expense of the
source of life
is obviously
suicidal.**

is to provide us with as much food as quickly and cheaply and with as few man-hours as possible, and to be a market for machines and chemicals.” These are policies of waste and ruin which are helping to destroy our health as well as our soil.

There is probably no better place than the U.S. farm to observe just how much modern “efficiency” has brought less “civilization” to contemporary life. For the attentive soil and animal husbandry, the self-reliant innovation and—in a word—the *experience* of the traditional small farmer, we now find absentee owners, lack of crop rotation, plowed-out waterways, run-down farms, fall plowing and the general dissociation of the cultivator from the land, the crop, the “culture” of farming.

How has it all happened?

Jefferson once wrote that “the small landowners are the most precious part of the State.” Yet in recent years we have heard Earl Butz boast: “95 percent of the American people have been freed from the drudgery of producing their own food,” and hardly batted an eyelash! Berry argues that we must ask such questions as: Have our uprooted, disenfranchised farmers been prospering in the inner city? Since when is providing yourself with nourishment for either body or mind a practice in “drudgery”?

Through such considered questioning we begin to see the agricultural crisis for what it really is: a crisis of character; the

American character.

It is the nature of Berry’s sweeping indictment—an attack upon our “consciousness” as well as the institutions we tolerate—that determines the form of his book, which deals with the history, practice, politics, and philosophies of American agriculture. (The distinction is always between “agriculture”—cultivation of the soil—and “agribusiness”—making money from the soil.) Berry’s thesis is a simple one: “An agriculture cannot survive long at the expense of the natural systems that support it and provide it with models. A culture cannot survive long at the expense of either its agriculture or natural resources. To live at the expense of the source of life is obviously suicidal.”

But Berry has not written a requiem for a lost noble cause, or a paean to the past. He takes pains to discuss “unorthodox” farming methods now in use somewhere in the country, ranging from Amish customs to new organic farming productivity to the revision of current Ag-school curricula in the U.S.

The availability of such alternatives at the present time only makes the entrenchment of the Agribusiness Combine—corporations, university specialists, and government officials—seem all the more dangerous and sinister, a fact which enhances the revolutionary flavor of the book. Berry often sounds like a Tom Paine crying out against the new “colonialization” of America. His essay—a book of ideas, nothing more nor less—is a manifesto and a call to action. Whether we are working for food co-operatives or strip-mining legislation, we must have “a vision of perfection, we must strive for it, we must serve the possibility of approaching it.”

Written with what James Dickson has called “a poet’s evocative richness of language,” the book is ultimately about our attitudes: “One must begin in one’s own life the private solutions that can only in turn become public solutions.”

Peter Bohan is a Chicago writer who was born and raised in downstate Illinois.

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HOLocaust



Distortion of history

Continued from page 24.

European fascism were used by the bourgeoisie (including that of the U.S.) to halt the growing strength of the left amidst capitalist crisis. But the TV viewer of *Holocaust* is given no inkling of this.

In the portrayal of the resistance, again, distortions abound.

We see not a single left partisan, though in fact the socialist and communist groups constituted a majority of the underground. The Soviet Union's incredible war effort is glossed over. In one of the series' most obscene moments, the Czech-Jewish refugee Helena must invent a communist past and seductively kiss the Russian commissar in order to be allowed passage to Kiev.

Jews are shown without exception as passively meeting death in the camps. In reality, undergrounds existed even within the concentration camps; there were escapes, revolts and sabotage. The single small band of Jewish partisans in *Holocaust* is seen as totally on its own. "The Ukrainians are as bad as the Nazis" is repeated several times.

We are led to believe that the Warsaw Ghetto fighters are similarly isolated. In fact, they had organic connections with the Pol-

ish left underground outside the walls. The latter rose up in solidarity in 1943. Nor is any mention made of similar revolts in ghettos throughout Europe.

The nature of the revolt itself is also gravely misrepresented in the docu-drama. Mordechai Anielewicz, commander of the Jewish Fighting Organization, is portrayed as representing "the Zionists," who favor resistance while other Jews supposedly do not. In real life, Anielewicz was the leader of *Hashomer Hatzair*, a mass, Marxist-Zionist organization, strongly pro-Soviet and coordinated with other parties of the Jewish and non-Jewish Polish left. There were Zionists who favored cooperation, just as there were non-Zionist Jews in both camps. Class divisions among the Jews provide a rough but much more accurate key to their response than does the Zionist/non-Zionist categorization.

(Parts of the German Jewish bourgeois were at first sympathetic to the Nazis' anti-left rhetoric. Some, like the Weiss family of *Holocaust*, remained passive for much too long, believing that they were too important a sector of German society to be seriously persecuted. Many Zionists, also refusing to believe in the real threat of Nazism and fixated on bringing as many young Jews—and as much capital—as possible to Palestine—and only Palestine—were also less than enthusiastic in organizing active resistance.

(The vast majority of Jews murdered by the Nazis were Eastern European working class and poor *petit bourgeois*—very different from the "typical Berlin family" presented on NBC. These Jewish masses were generally sympathetic to—and overrepresented in—the many socialist and communist parties that existed at the time. This fact helped the fascists use anti-Semitism to attack the left.)

But even the young radical Zionist Anielewicz fades into the background as NBC's version of the Warsaw Ghetto revolt unfolds. The active leaders we see are members of the officially-sanctioned Jewish Council. These bodies, which became known as the *Judenrat*, were manipulated into collaborating with the Nazis—keeping order, selecting laborers and organizing deportations. The real Jewish resistance in Warsaw assassinated these "leaders." (cf. *ITT*, April 19, "Interview with a Survivor.")

Finally, those Warsaw rebels who survived did not passively surrender as they do on TV. Many escaped to join their urban guerilla comrades on the other side of the wall or the partisans in the forests. Knowing the truth, one might suspect the producers of preferring to show the resistance as a noble but futile act of a few isolated Jews, rather than a remarkably well-organized (considering the circumstances) anti-fascist movement dedicated to building socialism after the war and containing many similarities to guerilla groups in some parts of the world today.

I do not recall hearing the word "fascism" once in the 9½-hour drama. If it did occur, it was well-hidden. American viewers were presented with a picture of evil vs. good; sick Nazis and other anti-Semites vs. Jews and their friends.

The crime against the Jewish people would be no less monstrous if seen, not as the outcome of a sick obsession, but as a crucial tool used to distract and morally disarm sufficiently large sectors of the European middle and lumpen classes. On the contrary, the holocaust becomes much more believable if we understand the powerful social forces that made it possible. By ignoring these forces, NBC is contributing to a new myth—that World War II was only a "war against the Jews." The absurdity of this new myth potentially adds ammunition to anti-Semites' stores.

It continues to provide credibility for their "hoax" theory and assumes moral repugnance, not true self-interest, as the only reason for non-Jews to oppose Nazism.

The TV film includes many long minutes of anti-Semitic Nazi ideology, with no intellectual refutation. The writers apparently considered it unnecessary. I am not so sure that they are right.

Why is the holocaust being taught in this distorted way, and perhaps more importantly, why now? Anyone with some conception of the ideological function of the mass media must look beyond the goal of high profits through high ratings.

American "Nazis," swastikas and all, have begun to reappear with alarming frequency. They have provoked an angry and sometimes violent response by Jews, blacks and the left, three sectors of the population that have lately been effectively divided by emotional issues such as Israel, community control and affirmative action. Programs like NBC's *Holocaust* might be interpreted as a way of co-opting the anti-Nazi feelings, discrediting and isolating this particular brand of neo-Nazism by telling at least part of the truth about its "heroes'" crime.

But there is little real danger that if fascism comes to the U.S. it will be headed by the nuts in storm trooper costumes who want to chant "Hitler was right" in Skokie streets. Nor will its chief victims necessarily be Jews. Identification of the Nazi phenomenon as unique, ahistorical and anti-Semitic in essence not only distorts its reality but mor-

ally immunizes potential American fascism from the stigma of association.

It is still too early to tell what course history will take in the U.S. A form of fascist movement is one possibility. If it occurs, we can be sure that it will exploit, one way or another, existing divisions between the various races, nationalities and sectors of the American working class.

There are important lessons to be drawn from a study of how Jews were victimized by European fascism 40 years ago. Socialists can make it their task to insure that a Pandora's box will be opened by the belated popularization of at least the half-truths present in programs like *Holocaust*. Exposure of Nazism's social content, and that of the resistance, must follow.

—David Mandel

Further Reading:

On the Jewish resistance:
They Fought Back, edited by Yuri Suhl, Schocken, 1967.
Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto: the Journal of Emmanuel Ringelblum, Jacob Sloan, editor and translator, Schocken, 1974.
Not As a Lamb, Lucien Steinberg, Saxon House, 1974.
On the Western Allies' response:
Wall Street and the Rise of Hitler, Antony Sutton, Seventy-Six, 1976.
While Six Million Died, Arthur Morse, Ace, 1969.
The Day of the Americans, Nerin E. Gun Fleet, 1966.
Other:
Destruction of the European Jews, Raul Hilberg, Watts, 1971.
The Murderers Among Us, Simon Wiesenthal, McGraw-Hill, 1967.

David Mandel has recently returned from Israel and is living in New York City.

High marks for Holocaust

Continued from page 24.

I cannot conclude this review without some comment on substantive weakness in the treatment. The opening incident in which the Weiss family faces the agonizing decision of whether or not to leave Germany while there is still time was dealt with much too casually.

More important was the lack of emphasis on the fact that the Nazis destroyed in their death camps not only six million Jews, but six million others—intellectuals, political opponents, Gyp-

sies, homosexuals and people who fell into no special category except opposition to the barbarism of the state.

And finally, there should have been more background information on conditions in Germany from 1916 to 1933, when inflation and depression drained the psychic reserves of the German people. If we are to avoid the mistakes of the past, we must understand the forces that shaped it.

The Holocaust deserves high marks for placing discussion of the Hitler era in the marketplace of ideas, which is its proper place in a democratic society.

—Stan Brody

Stan Brody is a stock broker whose avocation is historical research on the rise of Hitler.

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MUSIC

The new Lou Reed and a new British rocker

STREET HASSLE

Lou Reed
(Arista)

NEW BOOTS & PANTIES!!

Ian Dury and the Blockheads
(Stiff)

Lou Reed is riding high these days. His new album, *Street Hassle*, is receiving praise the likes of which hasn't been heard since Bruce Springsteen was called the future of rock and roll. He's also just wrapped up a nation-wide tour, leaving a path of superlatives behind him. And deservedly so.

Since the disbanding of the legendary Velvet Underground in 1970, Reed's career has been erratic, both on wax and in person. But he alone, among all the pop, schlock, punk and junk, came close to fulfilling his own wish that "the intelligence that inhabited novels and films would one day ingest rock."

Unfortunately, Reed achieved his broadest commercial success as the "Rock and Roll Animal," a vicious self-parody that temporarily shelved his higher musical ambitions. Yet subsequent albums never failed to reveal at least one or two glimmers to indicate that Lou's brain was still in perilously high gear.

Street Hassle achieves success for Reed on his own terms, but his vehicle is a bitter testimony to the pains he endured to get there. As usual, Reed isn't content to be your garden-variety genius and skitters off to the far edges, challenging his audience's taste and tolerance. But he is no easier on himself.

From the opening cut where he derides his former image ("Well, if it ain't the Rock & Roll Animal himself...you faggot junkie!") to the final song, where he pleads with someone to "Wait" while a chorus relentlessly repeats, "A disgrace...such a waste...of a pretty

face," Reed is his own fair game.

A prize example of this intriguing ambiguity is the track called "Dirt";

*Your lack of conscience
And your lack of morality
More and more people know all about it.*

*You're just dirt...
That's all you're worth
That's the only word that hurt
Cheap cheap cheap cheap up-town dirt.*

Exit forever the Rock and Roll Animal.

At first this seems to be another typically vitriolic attack on one of Lou's "two-bit friends," but suddenly the lyrics are being used to describe himself.

Reed is one performer who's been much abused and misunderstood by critics and fans alike. The latter, let down because he failed to rise to the expected heights, became his cruellest detractors. Posturing to the contrary, even the "Celine of Rock" has feelings. "The worst thing people can find out about me is how normal I am," Lou insists.

Street Hassle also contains an ironic update of the old Velvet's show-opener, "Real Good Time Together," and a bitingly satirical stab at racial stereotypes, "I Wanna Be Black," (which, like Randy Newman's "Short People," is bound to be misunderstood by many).

The title work is a series of gritty verbal tableaux about sex, drugs, death, loneliness and love on the seamier side of the city, strung together by a haunting musical coda. These half-spoken/half-sung excursions are chilling little tales that might have come

from an earlier Velvet's album—or Nelson Algren.

On stage, Lou does mostly new material, dressed in surprising white, looking healthier if not happier, free of any burden of props (even his guitar is transparent), chatting occasionally with the audience. Exit forever the Rock & Roll Animal, with sighs of relief all around.

Opening the show for Lou Reed on his recent tour was Ian Dury, an eccentric little Britisher with a crazy grin, who lunges and lurches across the stage, loaded down with old shopping bags full of dime-store gadgets, ratty scarves, bent umbrellas and a wide assortment of junk which he scatters all over himself and the audience. Despite being covered with clothespins, deflated balloons, sales tags, plastic pins and funny hats, with a Union Jack decal stuck to his teeth, Dury can rock and do it well.

He performs songs from his one album, *New Boots and Panties!!* which consists largely of charmingly teasing, or self-consciously naughty tunes such as "I'm Partial to Your Abracadabra" or "Wake Up and Make Love With Me." His brand of silliness and self-deprecating humor may not be everyone's cup of tea, but he can also cut loose with songs like "Sweet Gene Vincent," a touching paean to the early rock-'n'-roller who, like Dury, had a bad leg and a pronounced limp; or sing a loving but unsentimental tribute to "My Old Man."

Unfortunately, *New Boots and Panties!!* has been watered-down in production so that even the best songs lack the power of his live renditions. But, if you have a strong sense of humor, it'd be worthwhile to give it a try.

—P. Hertel

P. Hertel is a free-lance writer in Chicago who reviews regularly for IN THESE TIMES.



MOVIES

Highly polished, but still very obscure

THAT OBSCURE OBJECT OF DESIRE

Written and directed by Luis Bunuel

With Fernando Rey, Carole Bouquet and Angela Molina
First Artists, Rated R

Off in a curio shop somewhere there's a piece of porcelain that has caught your eye. It amuses you. It sparkles. But it is gimmicky and elusive. You'll probably never buy it. Its attraction is simply a matter of form and sheen.

Luis Bunuel's *That Obscure Object of Desire* resembles that artifact. Its maker has wit, refinement and mastery of the visual medium. But his elegance serves nothing more than itself. The film, for all his craftsmanship, is a perfect bauble.

Its straightforward narrative style comes as a bit of a surprise. Bunuel, after all, is supposed to be a surrealist. His films are not supposed to make sense. Here, however, he gives us a plot that (until the end) is not only familiar, but downright archaic.

A society gentleman named Farbet (Fernando Rey) becomes infatuated with a mysterious, raven-eyed beauty. Although he is nearly 60 and she is just 18, Farbet burns with the fire of an adolescent love. He is consumed by his need for Conchita, who is, of course, unattainable.

Farbet tries to win her with an old-world mix of romantic resources: his headstrong passion, his social graces and, when those fail, his money. To Conchita he swears devotion; to her mother he brings bags full of currency. Both kinds of charm prove resistible. Conchita does go to bed with him, but wearing an ingenious chastity belt.

Who is this Conchita (besides the best trick in the film)? From scene to scene she seems to vary in appearance and character. First she is slender, cold, aloof, with a crooked smile. Then she is round-

faced, talkative, voluptuous, a passionate teaser. It becomes clear eventually that there are two Conchitas, played by two different actresses (Bouquet and Molina) with voice over by a third). Conchita, the austere, is often angry at her suitor, never hot-blooded. Conchita, the seductive, plays the scenes of tenderness, violence and the dance sequences. Both say they love Farbet, but deny his amorous advances.

Taken together they barely add up to anything more than a masculine fantasy of coquettishness.

The film tells this fairy-tale through a time-tested framing device—the tale within the tale. Farbet relates the story of his love episodically to a group of traveling companions he meets by chance on the train. The story is adroitly told. The photography is artful, especially in the use of color: vivid backgrounds against which move figures dressed in black, white and gray.

Ultimately, however, neither the narrative nor the visual aspect does much for the film's theme. Neither does the comic tension seem to help. Bunuel gives us the fanciful Revolutionary Army of the Infant Jesus, but never explains why they seem to be stalking Farbet throughout the film. And he builds up the gentleman's heightening mania for the girl only to dissipate it in a hazy ending.

In *That Obscure Object of Desire* Bunuel has paid tribute to a man's desire for the unreachable woman. But one wishes he had relied less on art than on heart. The film has moments that will astonish and stimulate some in the audience, but most of its triumphs are merely stylistic. For all its polish and humor, it winds down to an impenetrable close.

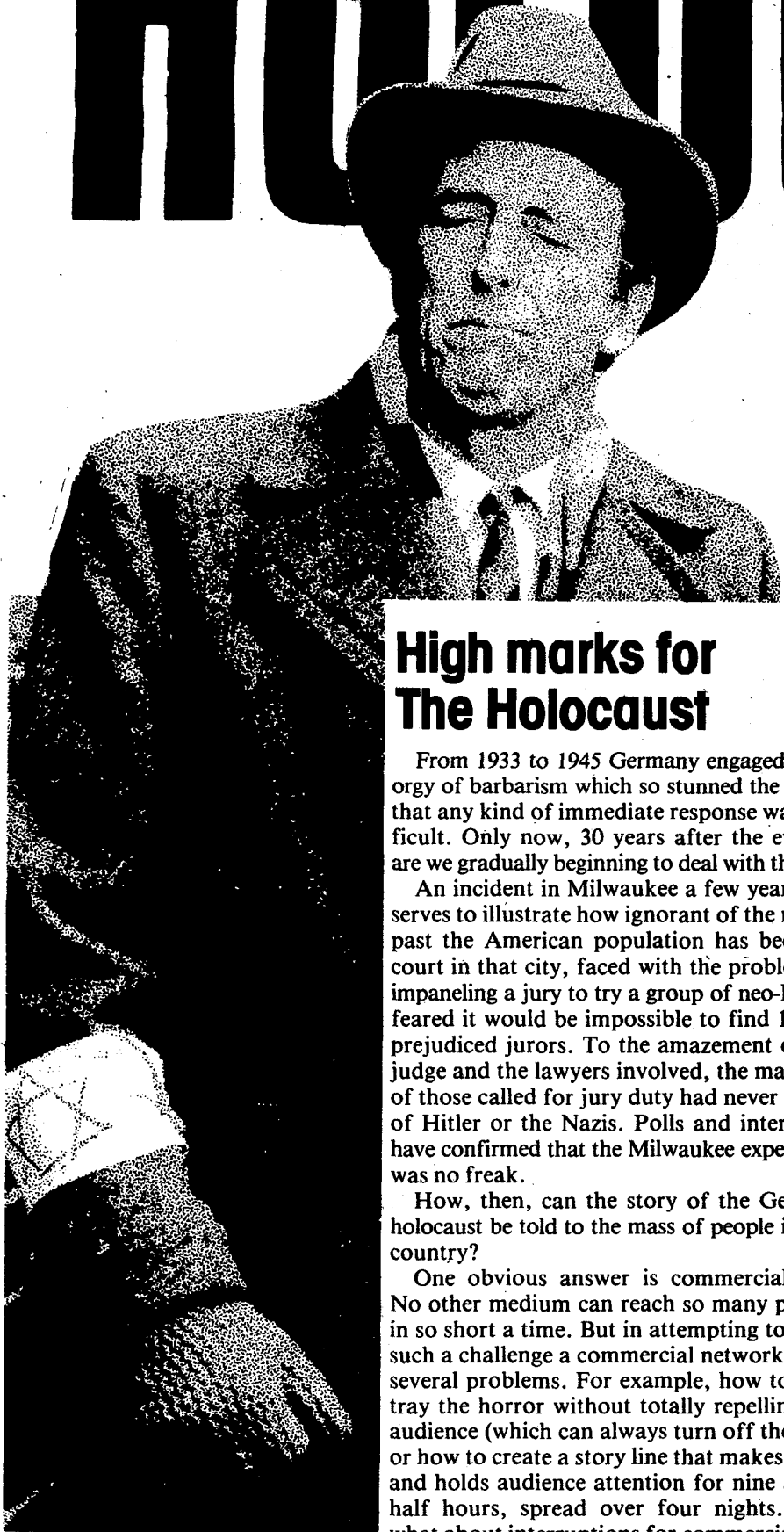
For this viewer the obscure object in the theater was not so much the beautiful Conchita as the film itself.

—Donald Venes

Donald Venes is a free-lance writer in Chicago who reviews regularly for IN THESE TIMES.



HOLocaust



High marks for The Holocaust

From 1933 to 1945 Germany engaged in an orgy of barbarism which so stunned the world that any kind of immediate response was difficult. Only now, 30 years after the events, are we gradually beginning to deal with them.

An incident in Milwaukee a few years ago serves to illustrate how ignorant of the recent past the American population has been. A court in that city, faced with the problem of impaneling a jury to try a group of neo-Nazis, feared it would be impossible to find 12 unprejudiced jurors. To the amazement of the judge and the lawyers involved, the majority of those called for jury duty had never heard of Hitler or the Nazis. Polls and interviews have confirmed that the Milwaukee experience was no freak.

How, then, can the story of the German holocaust be told to the mass of people in this country?

One obvious answer is commercial TV. No other medium can reach so many people in so short a time. But in attempting to meet such a challenge a commercial network faces several problems. For example, how to portray the horror without totally repelling the audience (which can always turn off the set); or how to create a story line that makes sense and holds audience attention for nine and a half hours, spread over four nights. And what about interruptions for commercials?

In my opinion NBC's production of *The Holocaust* was largely successful in overcoming these difficulties.

There have been complaints that the commercials were too frequent, that the inmates of the concentration camps looked too healthy, that the last episode was contrived, etc. All these things are true. But it is also true that the essential thrust of the series was to bring to a vast audience the story of Hitler's Germany and what it did, not only to its victims, but to the perpetrators of the deeds.

One is left with the overall impression of having seen a horrible period accurately and powerfully portrayed.

I had nightmares about the interrogation of Jewish prisoners who are forced to give the names of their "whore mothers" and "pimp fathers." As a father, I will never forget Dr. Weiss' face when his former patients refused to help him find his son. The rape scene projected the utter helplessness of the individual in Hitler's Germany through the person of the child, Anna. And from now on, whenever Christmas arrives, the celebration in the Dorf household will lurk in the back of my mind.

NBC is to be commended not only for the production, but for tying the whole thing together with interviews on the *Today* show and, in Chicago, with the presentation of reactions of members of the German and the Jewish communities, as well as a news special on the local Nazi organizations and the current controversy about their right to march in Skokie.

This helps us all to realize that the phenomenon of fascism continues to exist as a community problem.

Continued on page 22.

The history of Nazism distorted

Prime time showing of NBC's extravaganza *Holocaust* dramatically demonstrates that the mass media's previous attitude toward the Nazi "war against the Jews"—avoiding discussion in order to cover up the Western allies' complacency—has been changed. This in itself is important, because it was that long silence which lent slight credibility—for those who wanted to believe—to claims of latter-day anti-Semites that the murder of six million Jews was a "hoax."

Perhaps the recent show brought home something of the enormity of Nazi crimes to the whole new generation of viewers that has come of age since the events depicted took place. But if, as I suspect, the NBC special was the first exposure to the subject for many Americans, then they are being taught a dangerously distorted history, especially concerning the roots of Nazism and the nature of the resistance. And it is precisely these two subjects which have the most to teach Americans about the possible rise of fascism here and now, and how to fight it.

Author Elie Wiesel, a survivor, complains that the holocaust was "trivialized" by the "docu-drama" semi-fiction technique (*New York Times*, April 16). He points out numerous errors of cultural-religious practice and some of historical detail. Exasperated in the realization that "what you have seen on the screen is not what happened there," Wiesel resorts to mysticism in conclusion: "Auschwitz cannot be explained nor can it be visualized. Whether culmination or aberration of history, the Holocaust transcends history. Everything about it inspires fear and leads to despair: The dead are in possession of a secret that we, the living, are neither worthy of nor capable of recovering."

Wiesel's instincts are correct but his conclusion is dead wrong. It is not the plot, in its focus on the fates of two fictionalized families, that trivializes the holocaust. Rather, it is the removal of the story from its historical context and distortion of that context when occasionally referred to.

Though portrayed less stereotypically than in most WWII flicks, the Nazis remain a band of back-stabbing rogues and psychopaths whose main goal in life is to persecute and exterminate Jews. And except for one mention of other concentration camp inmates (Gypsies, homosexuals, the mentally deficient, politicals), the only victims portrayed are Jews and individuals who happen to be personally involved with them.

Jewish slave labor is shown, but the only "private" boss is a road building contractor, portrayed as disgusted by what he sees, who tries to help keep Jews alive by insisting on "employing" them rather than POWs. The only connection shown with the manufacturers of poison gas is a low level professional chemist. There is no treatment of the German working class, that of the other occupied countries or their parties and unions. Nazism and the other concurrent manifestations of

Continued on page 22.

